

Moroccan Roasted Butternut Squash

From Nelson's Kitchen
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I created this recipe after trying to make Spiced Lentils with Pumpkin a few times. It is a Moroccan recipe by Tess Mallos that I found in *The food of Morocco: a journey for food lovers*. In that recipe the squash and the lentils are cooked together, with correct timing, but in a stewed fashion. I decided to instead roast the squash with spices and add to the very end. One issue with roasting squash is that often it falls apart into a mush. Thus I remembered that my Mom, Dioraci Urtassum, makes a sweet squash dish where it is cooked for a long time in sirup and never falls apart. The secret is to use calcium to set the pectin in the squash before cooking it. Thus I resorted to pickle crisp, which is a calcium product used to ensure that pickles remain crisp. In Edmonton I found pickle crisp at Canadian Tire.

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 tablespoon of pickle crisp
- 1 small butternut squash (1 1/2 to 2 pounds)
- 1/2 teaspoon of salt
- 1 teaspoon of turmeric
- 1/2 teaspoon of paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon of cumin
- 2 tablespoon of olive oil

Procedure:

1. Prepare the pumpkin

- Peel the pumpkin removing all the white part of the peel.
- Cut the pumpkin in 3/4-inch cubes.
- Mix one tablespoon of pickle crisp with half gallon of cold water.
- Put the pumpkin in the water and let soak for at least 45 minutes. It can soak overnight.

2. Season the pumpkin

- Drain the pumpkin and rinse under running cold water.
- Leave in a colander or strainer until most of the water has dripped off.
- Mix the spices in a small bowl.
- Sprinkle the salt over the pumpkin tossing by lifting the bowl.
- Sprinkle the spices on the salted pumpkin.
- Let it seat for at least 45 minutes, but up to several hours.

3. Roast the pumpkin

- Put a light colour metal rimmed baking sheet in the oven.
- Pre-heat the oven to 350 F.
- Once the oven is hot, remove the hot baking sheet from the oven, and put the olive oil on it making sure to spread over a large area in the center

- Transfer the seasoned pumpkin from the bowl onto the oiled baking sheet and put back in the oven.
- Roast for 45 minutes.
- Using a spatula, turn the pumpkin pieces around, rotate the baking sheet.
- Continue roasting for another 15 to 30 minutes until a sharp paring knife pierces through the pieces of pumpkin easily

4. Serving or using in another recipe

- You can serve warm immediately after roasting.
- If using in another recipe, it can be prepared a day in advance, cooled, placed into the refrigerator, and warmed up either in the oven or in the microwave the next day.