

Salt and Serenity

Roasted Winter Squash Salad with Warm Cider Vinaigrette

Ina Garten, of Barefoot Contessa fame, originally created this recipe. I have adapted it, slightly. A large butternut squash or 2 smaller acorn squashes work well in this recipe.

Serves 4

1 winter squash, about 2 pounds, peeled and diced into $\frac{3}{4}$ inch pieces
2 tablespoons Extra Virgin Olive Oil
1 tablespoon pure maple syrup
1 teaspoon kosher salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup dried cherries
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup apple cider or apple juice
2 tablespoons cider vinegar
2 large shallots, finely minced
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil
1 teaspoon kosher salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
5 ounces (1 container) of baby arugula, washed and spun dry
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pecans, toasted, and coarsely chopped
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup freshly sliced Parmesan shards (a vegetable peeler works well for this)

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Place the diced squash on a parchment paper lined baking sheet. Toss with olive oil, maple syrup, salt and pepper. Roast the squash for 20 to 25 minutes, turning once, until tender. Add the dried cherries to the pan for the last 5 minutes.
3. While the squash is roasting, combine the apple cider or juice, vinegar, and shallots in a small saucepan and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Cook for 8-10 minutes, until the cider is reduced to about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup. Off the heat, whisk in the mustard, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup olive oil, 1 teaspoon salt, and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of pepper.
4. Place the arugula in a large salad bowl and add the roasted squash mixture and the pecans. Spoon just enough vinaigrette over the salad to lightly moisten and toss well. Top with Parmesan shards and serve.

