

Salt and Serenity

Roasted Squash with Maple Syrup, Smoked Paprika and Sage Salt

Very slightly adapted from Melissa Clark's recipe in her book, *Cook This Now*.

Serves 4-6

- 4 large sage sprigs (about 16 nice leaves)
- 2 medium acorn squash, washed
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 teaspoons maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon smoked sweet paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 teaspoons coarse sea salt (like Maldon)
- 1/4 cup toasted, salted pepita (pumpkin) seeds for garnish (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Place sage leaves in a small baking pan. Roast sage leaves until just crisp, about 10 minutes; transfer to a rack to cool. Turn oven down to 350°F.
2. While sage leaves are roasting, slice the squash crosswise into 1/2-inch rings or into wedges. No need to peel. Acorn squash skin gets quite tender when baked and is completely edible. Use a spoon to scoop the seeds from the center of each ring or wedge and discard.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together the oil, maple syrup, smoked paprika, and 1/2 teaspoon of kosher salt. Arrange squash on a 2 parchment lined baking sheets; brush the paprika oil over the squash.
4. Roast squash until tender and light golden, 30 to 35 minutes. You can turn them over halfway through the cooking time.
5. Transfer squash to a platter. Crumble dried sage leaves in a small bowl with the 2 teaspoons of coarse salt; sprinkle some of the sage salt over the squash. (There will be leftover sage salt. It is delicious in scrambled eggs or on roast chicken or turkey!) Scatter toasted pumpkin seeds on top for crunch. Serve!