

Roasted Butternut Squash and Apple Soup

Serves 6

While roasting the squash adds an additional hour to this recipe, I really like the depth of flavour that roasting adds. If you are short of time, by all means skip the roasting and add the squash, peeled and cubed into 1 inch chunks in step 3 of the recipe.

1 large butternut squash
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 leeks (white and pale green parts only), halved lengthwise, then cut crosswise into ½ inch thick slices
½ teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
1 teaspoon kosher salt
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 baking potato, peeled and cut into 1 inch dice
2 tart apples, either granny Smith or Lobo, peeled and cut into 1 inch dice
4 cups vegetable or chicken stock

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Cut squash in half, scoop out seeds and place, cut side down, on a baking sheet. Bake in oven for one hour, until squash is tender. Scoop flesh out with a spoon and set aside. Throw out skin.
2. Wash leek slices in a bowl of cold water, agitating, then lift out and pat dry.
3. In a large soup pot, heat oil over medium heat. Add leeks and sauté over low heat until tender, about 5 minutes. Add cumin, thyme, salt and pepper and stir well. Add squash, potato, apples and stock. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer for about 20 minutes (or 30 minutes if squash was not roasted first), covered.
4. Puree soup. If using a blender, puree in 2 batches. Taste and add additional salt and pepper if needed. If soup seems too thick, add a bit of water to thin it out.