

Salt and Serenity

Squash, Pear and Ginger Soup

Because this is a smooth (pureed) soup, I like to serve it with some crunchy garnishes, for texture. Pumpkin seeds are a great addition. If you have extra time and want to make a very pretty garnish, I have included instructions to make pear chips.

Serves 6-8

2 kilograms butternut squash (about 2 medium squash)
3 ripe pears
4 teaspoons olive oil
1½ teaspoons Kosher salt
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
4 shallots, or 1 small onion, peeled and coarsely chopped
2 teaspoons freshly grated ginger
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves or ½ teaspoon dried thyme
¼ teaspoon Aleppo pepper or red pepper flakes
3-4 cups vegetable stock (I love the low sodium one made by [Better than Bouillon](#))
For Garnish:
Plain yogurt, thinned out with a bit of water
Hulled toasted pumpkin seeds
Pear chips (optional) -Recipe below

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Cut squash in half lengthwise and scoop out seeds. No need to peel. Peel and quarter pears and remove core. Rub flesh side of squash and pear quarters with olive oil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Arrange squash halves cut side down on parchment lined baking sheet. Add pear quarters to baking sheet. Roast in oven and check progress after 20 minutes. Once the pears are soft, remove them from baking sheet and continue roasting the squash. It will take about 45 minutes in total.
2. While squash and pears are roasting, heat a large Dutch oven over medium heat. Add 1 tablespoon of olive oil, chopped shallots and ginger. Sauté for 2 minutes, stirring frequently. If shallots start to burn, add ¼ cup water. Add thyme and Aleppo pepper. Continue sautéing until shallots are soft, about 2-3 minutes more.
3. Scoop soft squash flesh into pot and discard skin. Add softened pear quarters. Add 2 cups stock and bring heat up to high. Mash squash and pears with a wooden spoon and cook for a few minutes.
4. Remove soup from heat and transfer about ¼ of the mixture to a blender. Carefully blend. Pour blended soup into clean pot and continue blending in batches. If mixture seems too thick, thin with additional stock.
5. Ladle soup into bowls and garnish with drizzle of yogurt, pumpkin seeds, and pear chips, if using.

Pear Chips

Pear chips will keep in an airtight container for up to a week.

2 firm pears

¼ cup maple syrup

1. Preheat oven to 225°F. Using a very sharp knife or mandoline, slice whole unpeeled pears lengthwise into 1/8-inch-thick slices.
2. Arrange in a single layer on a parchment lined baking sheet, making sure pears don't overlap. Brush pears with maple syrup on top side only. Roast pears for 90 minutes. Flip pears over and roast for an additional 60-90 minutes, until pears have browned slightly, and edges have curled. They will still be pliable.
3. Transfer pear slices to a wire rack and let cool completely. They will become crisp when cooled. Store at room temperature in an airtight container. They will stay crisp for about a week.