

Here is a delicious autumn soup to serve before Turkey on Thanksgiving. What I do is buy small pumpkins, or other squashes that are colorful to use as soup bowls. Then I cut off the top about 2 inches from the stem. Remove the seeds and fiber from the top and the interior of the pumpkin or squash. Place the bowls and tops on a lightly oiled baking pan in a 350 degree oven for 30 to 40 minutes, until they are soft. These can be made a day or two ahead. Just reheat the soup and serve it in heated pumpkin bowls.

Tante Marie's Butternut Squash Soup with Ginger

Ingredients

4 lb. yellow or orange winter squash, such as butternut, perfection or kamocho
2 Tbs. vegetable oil
1 medium yellow onion, halved and thinly sliced
2 tsp. finely minced fresh ginger
1-1/2 tsp. finely minced garlic
1/2 cinnamon stick
1 whole star anise, broken into 8 points
5 cups good quality chicken or vegetable stock
coarse salt
freshly ground pepper

Instructions

Cut the squash in half, discard the seeds, and place cut side down on a lightly oiled baking sheet. Bake in a preheated 400 degree oven until very soft, 50 to 60 minutes for a large squash. Let cool. Discard the peel (scraping well to reserve any flesh), then cut the squash into chunks.

In a large, heavy, non-aluminum stockpot, heat the oil over moderate heat. Add the onion, ginger, garlic, cinnamon, and star anise, tossing well to combine. Cover the pot, lower the heat, and cook gently about 15 minutes.

Add the squash and stock, stir to mix, and bring slowly to a near boil over moderate heat, stirring occasionally. Turn off the heat, cover the pot, and let the soup stand for 30 minutes for the flavors to marry. Discard the cinnamon stick and the star anise; puree the soup in batches in a blender or food processor.

Return to the pot, heat carefully, stirring to prevent sticking on the bottom of the pot. Taste and add salt and pepper to taste. If the soup tastes flat, add a dash of soy sauce; if it needs sharpness, add a few drops of tobassco.

Serves 8.