

Celebrating Autumn with Squash

Brought to you by Froedtert and Community Memorial Hospital Dietitians

When the leaves of autumn turn gold, they often bring to mind favorite fall events Halloween, homecomings and Thanksgiving, to mention just a few. And, now that the weather is cooler if not downright nippy, autumn also turns thoughts to favorite dishes, from baked apples and pumpkin pie to succulent roasts and other hot dishes including baked squash.

Squash offers a rich supply of many health-promoting substances. One quarter of a butternut squash provides an entire day's worth of vitamin A, plus a healthy dose of vitamin C, iron, calcium and fiber. The rich orange color of winter squash signals the presence of the protective phytochemicals called carotenoids, which appear to play an anticancer role and enhance immunity.

This butternut squash, tomato and watercress soup is featured in the recently-published New American Plate Cookbook: Recipes for a Healthy Weight and a Healthy Life. Like many of the recipes in that extraordinary cookbook, this creamy soup contains a variety of vegetables that we always intend to eat but never find ways to include in a meal. The soup has a sweet undertone and, served with whole-grain bread dipped in olive oil, has all the soothing effects of a comfort food.

Butternut Squash, Tomato, and Watercress Soup
(from The New American Plate Cookbook)

2 Tbsp. olive oil
2 large tomatoes, seeded and chopped
1 small onion, chopped
1 small garlic clove, sliced
2 small carrots, chopped
1 cup peeled and chopped butternut squash
1 medium potato, peeled and chopped
1 bunch watercress, including stems,
2 cups fat-free, reduced-sodium chicken broth
4 cups water
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
2/3 cup frozen corn kernels, thawed, for garnish coarsely chopped

In a large saucepan, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Sauté the tomatoes, onion and garlic for about 12 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the onions are translucent.

Add the carrots, squash, potato, watercress and chicken broth. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, and simmer, uncovered, for 30 minutes. Add the water and return the mixture to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, for about 10 minutes, until the vegetables are very soft. Remove the saucepan from the heat and let the soup sit for 15 minutes to cool slightly.

In a blender or food processor, purée the soup in batches and return to the saucepan. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Reheat soup. Ladle the soup into bowls and garnish with the corn kernels. (The boiling hot soup heats the corn, eliminating the need to cook it separately before adding.)

Makes 6 servings.

Per serving: 111 calories, 5 g. total fat (less than 1 g. saturated fat), 16 g. carbohydrate, 3 g. protein, 3 g. dietary fiber, 167 mg. sodium.

Tip from: www.aicr.org. Tip written by Dana Jacobi for the American Institute for Cancer Research