



Butternut Squash Appetizers

Roasted squash spread infused with Rosemary

Makes 24-30 appetizers ~ \$5.28 (approx. \$.22 per appetizer)

This is a seasonal appetizer (perfect for fall get-togethers and Thanksgiving). Don't be afraid to experiment with different winter squashes. The Farmers Market offers a wonderful variety and the farmers are always willing to talk to you about them. Use this recipe as a "springboard for your own tastes—more chile, less honey, etc. Try to use fresh rosemary and make sure that it truly is finely minced. You don't want your guests biting into a long hard leaf. Also note that how you slice your baguette (straight or on the diagonal) affects the size of the individual serving. Diagonal slices give you a larger crostini.

Ingredients

- 1 Butternut squash (approximately 1 1/2 pounds, seeded, peeled and cut into 1" cubes)
- 4 oz. goat cheese, thinned with several tablespoons of milk or cream to form a nice spreadable consistency. (Optional)
- 30 walnut halves (adjust the number up or down according to the number of slices you get out of one baguette)
- 2/3 cup of olive oil – divided in half
- 1/2 tsp. red chile flakes
- Salt and pepper
- 1 head of garlic
- 1 Tbsp. chopped rosemary, finely minced
- 1 baguette, sliced into 1/4" slices.
- 1/3 to 1/2 cup of honey

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400°. In a bowl, toss butternut squash cubes, rosemary, chile flakes, a sprinkling of salt and pepper and about 1/3 cup of oil until squash is well-coated. Lay out on a cookie sheet.
2. Cut about 1/4" off the top of the head of garlic. Center the garlic head, cut-side up, on a piece of aluminum foil. Drizzle some olive oil over the top and fold the foil up to create a package. Bake the squash and the garlic for 20-30 minutes. Keep an eye on the squash so it doesn't burn. Squash should be fork-tender. Remove squash and garlic from oven and set aside to cool slightly.
3. Reduce temperature of oven to 350°. Slice the baguette in 1/4" slices. Brush both sides with olive oil. Lay out on a baking sheet and bake for approximately 15 minutes. Remove and let cool.
4. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. Heat about 1/3 cup of oil in a frying pan over medium heat until it becomes thin. Toss in walnut halves and stir gently to make sure that walnuts are universally covered. Spread in a single layer on the first baking sheet. Bake at 300° for 10-12 minutes. Do not let them burn. Remove from oven and transfer to second baking sheet, making sure to separate the nuts, and let cool, approximately 30 minutes. Honey will harden on the nuts as they cool.
5. Scrape squash mixture into a food processor. "Pop" the garlic cloves from their paper-like skin in with the squash. Garlic cloves should be soft. Add 1-2 Tbsp. honey. Process until smooth.

To Serve: Spread each crostini with a thin coating of thinned goat cheese if you're using it as a base. Top with a good-sized dollop of butternut squash mixture and gently spread to cover layer of goat cheese. Alternatively, spread the squash mixture directly onto the crostini. Press a honey walnut half into the middle of the mixture. Serve and enjoy.

Note: Great served with Prosecco (an Italian sparkling wine, similar to champagne.)

Recipe courtesy of Mary Pat Butler.

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