

Festive Butternut Roast

Serves: Serves 4

Ingredients

- 1 large butternut squash
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 red onion
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed or finely chopped
- 100g puy lentils
- 100g fresh cranberries
- 2 stalks fresh rosemary, leaves stripped and finely chopped
- 2 stalks fresh thyme, leaves stripped
- ½ tsp freshly grated nutmeg
- 150ml vegetable stock
- 80g fresh spinach, finely chopped
- 50g pistachios, roughly chopped

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Slice the butternut squash in half lengthways, and scoop out and discard the seeds. Brush or spray with a little oil, then bake in the oven for 30-40 minutes until the flesh is tender enough to scoop out with a spoon. Remove from the oven and set aside until cool enough to handle.
2. Meanwhile, in a large saucepan or frying pan with a lid, heat the olive oil and add the onion and garlic. Cook over a gentle heat for 5 minutes until softened.
3. Add the lentils, cranberries, rosemary and thyme leaves, nutmeg and vegetable stock, bring to the boil, then cover and lower to a gentle simmer. Cook for 30 minutes or until the lentils are tender, (but still have a little bite to them). NB you may need to add a little more water near the end of cooking time if the lentils have soaked up all the liquid - keep an eye on them and stir regularly.
4. Take one half of the butternut squash and scoop out most of the flesh with a spoon, leaving a little all the way around so that the squash holds its shape. Be careful not to tear the skin if possible, (though the occasional hole won't be disastrous!). Add the squash flesh to the pan of lentils, and mash it into the mixture with a fork. Repeat with the other squash half. Taste the mixture, and add salt as necessary.
5. Stir the spinach and pistachios into the lentil mixture, and mix well to combine, then spoon the mixture into both halves of the squash until it is level, (see picture above) - there may be a little left over, but keep this aside to serve separately - don't over-fill or you will lose the nice, neat circular shape of your roast. Place one half on top of the other, and then tie with string every 3-4 centimeters.



6. Return to the oven for 10 minutes until piping hot throughout.

Recipe by Kate Ford | The Veg Space