

Acorn Squash stuffed with Red Quinoa, Cranberries and Pecans

From my earliest memories growing up in Minneapolis, as soon as the weather would turn crisp and cool and before the first snowfall that often came at Halloween, that's when the acorn squash would appear on our table. Baked with butter and brown sugar in the center, it was earthy and warm and well, a sign that autumn was here to stay. I've decided to jazz it up a bit with a stuffing of quinoa, dried cranberries and pecans, which would make a perfect meal on a cool autumn evening. Don't miss the step of rinsing the quinoa, as it removes a bitter coating.

2	acorn squashes	2	Tablespoons	olive oil	
1	cup	red quinoa or combine with white quinoa	1	small	onion
1	cup	vegetable stock	1 1/2	Tablespoons	butter
1	cup	fresh orange juice	4	teaspoons	brown sugar
1	sprig	thyme	1	pinch	salt and pepper to taste
1/4	cup	dried cranberries	1/4	cup	pecans, coarsely chopped

- 1 While oven is heating up to 425°, cut the acorn squash in half lengthwise and remove seeds. Place on a baking sheet cut side down. Bake for about 30 minutes or until the flesh is soft when pierced with a meat fork.
- 2 While squashes are roasting, rinse quinoa under cold water in a fine mesh strainer and place in a saucepan with the vegetable stock, orange juice and thyme sprig. Bring to a boil and then reduce to a simmer and cover the pot. After 10 minutes, add cranberries and recover pot. Continue to simmer for about 10 more minutes, making sure pan does not run dry.
- 3 Meanwhile, in a skillet over low heat, add 2 Tablespoons olive oil and the onion. Cover the skillet and let cook in its steam for about 8 minutes or until translucent and soft. Remove from heat and keep covered. When quinoa is done, add it to the onion mixture and mix. Remove cover to prevent quinoa from getting mushy. Just before serving, add pecan pieces.
- 4 Once the squash is tender, turn it over and add a pat of butter, a rounded teaspoon of brown sugar, salt and pepper to each center. Let it melt. With a fork mash the butter mixture into the squash flesh. Create a well in the center. Top with the quinoa mixture, garnish with pecan pieces and serve immediately.

Servings: 4

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 30 minutes

Total Time: 40 minutes

Oven Temperature: 425°F

Nutrition Facts

Nutrition (per serving): 607 calories, 179 calories from fat, 20.5g total fat, 12.1mg cholesterol, 492.5mg sodium, 1287mg potassium, 100.3g carbohydrates, 10.5g fiber, 10.7g sugar, 10.5g protein.

Source

Author: Patricia K. Rose, October 2014

