

Seasonal Eating
Whitney Danhof, Extension Agent

Butternut Makes a Hearty Fall Soup
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Butternut squash is fall favorite of mine. I love the sweet flavor and beautiful orange flesh. I had never really had butternut squash until I moved here and Jo Newton served it at a luncheon I attended. It was love at first bite and I've been using it ever since. I make a quick bread with cranberries and butternut. I roast it in cubes for salad with kale and oranges. I roast it with molasses for a side dish. And I puree the roasted flesh for soup. Versatile and yummy.



It is a little intimidating to get into but well worth the effort. Use a large cutting board and a large, sharp chef's knife. I usually cut the stem end off

and then cut the squash in half about where it starts to bulb out. The top section can then stand up flat and I cut the peel off with the knife, going down the sides, top to bottom. Then I cut the blossom end off the bottom half and set it upright, cutting the peel off it the same way. Then cut in half and scoop out the seeds. If roasting to mash, just cut in half lengthwise, scoop out the seeds and roast face down on parchment paper on a baking sheet. When tender, let cool and scoop out the flesh.

Most butternut squash soups have a very mild flavor and use boiled cubes or roasted halves of butternut squash. However, I wanted a heartier, bolder flavored soup that stands up to the fall weather. So I browned my cubes of squash with onion and spices until well browned and tender and flavored it with a mixture of honey, lemon and mustard. That all gets pureed with chicken broth to thin it out and then it is served with browned pieces of smoked sausage. Hearty and full flavored.

I used a smoked sausage but you could use a Polish sausage or Kielbasa or even an apple chicken sausage. The caramelized pieces of sausage add a different texture and complement the sweet tang of the soup. Add a crusty piece of artisan bread and maybe a salad for a perfect fall supper or serve it on Halloween for a quick meal before trick or treating.

For more seasonal eating recipes and information check out the Bedford County Extension website (bedford.tennessee.edu).

Butternut Squash Soup with Smoked Sausage

- 7 ounces fully cooked smoked sausage, chopped
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 butternut squash, peeled and cut into 1/4" cubes
- 1/4 red onion, chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon ground sage
- 1/4 teaspoon dried thyme

1/4 teaspoon black pepper
3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1 tablespoon honey
1 1/2 teaspoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon whole grain mustard
1 1/2 -2 cup chicken broth

In a medium to large skillet, brown the smoked sausage over medium high heat until well browned. Remove to a bowl and set aside. Add butter to any drippings in the skillet and add the squash and onion. Sprinkle with sage, thyme, pepper and salt and cook over medium high heat until the squash is tender and browned, about 10 minutes, stirring frequently. In a small bowl, combine the honey, lemon juice and mustard. Pour over the squash mixture and cook a few more minutes to reduce liquid. Remove the squash mixture from the heat and let cool slightly. Add cooled squash to a blender and pour in about a cup of the chicken broth. Carefully blend until smooth, adding remaining chicken broth until desired consistency (about the texture of heavy cream). Pour back into pan and heat again. Serve in bowls topped with the browned sausage pieces.