

Stuffed Butternut Squash

This is more of an idea than a hard and fast recipe. You can follow the principle and use almost any ingredients that you like. I often end up using whatever I have lying around in the fridge. Butternut squash is so good that it's actually quite difficult to get it to taste bad (this is not a challenge).

1 medium sized Butternut Squash
225 grms potato
1 onion
75 grams sliced chestnut mushrooms
1 diced red pepper
2 cloves of garlic
1 large bunch of flat leaved parsley
1 Buffalo Mozzarella cheese (I'm not a slave to fashion I promise, buffalo definitely tastes better)
75 grms cheddar cheese



Pre heat the oven to 200^o C.

Slice the squash in two lengthways. Scoop out the seeds and place the squash cut side down on a greased baking sheet. Roast the squash in the oven for between 40 minutes to an hour. You can tell when it's cooked by pressing the skin of the squash. It will feel soft when it's done.

Peel the potatoes and cut into even sized pieces. Cover with water and add a teaspoon of salt. Bring to the boil and simmer until soft enough to mash. Drain and mash the potato without adding any butter, cream or milk. You want a dry mash that will take up the juice from the butternut squash. I always use a potato ricer to make mash. It always gives a lump free result.

Whilst the squash and potatoes are cooking, make the stuffing. Peel and dice the onion. Pour a couple of tablespoons of olive oil into a frying pan. Add the onion and cook gently over a medium heat for a few minutes until it begins to soften. Crush the garlic and add to the onions along with the red pepper. Continue to cook until the pepper begins to soften. Empty the pan on to a plate and set aside.

Splash a little more olive oil to the pan and then add the mushrooms. Cook until the mushrooms have given up most of their moisture and have taken on a little colour.

Add the mushrooms rest of the stuffing ingredients.

When cooked, remove the squash from the oven and allow to cool slightly so that you can handle it without the need for a trip to casualty.

Place both halves of the squash, cut side up, into a baking dish that you'd be happy to take to the table. Carefully scoop out the flesh and place into a mixing bowl. Try not to break the squash skins but don't worry if you do - it will taste just as good.

Add the mashed potato and the rest of the stuffing to the squash in the mixing bowl. Chop the parsley and also add to the stuffing. Season well with black pepper and sea salt. Mix everything together really well then spoon the end result back into the squash skins.

Grate the cheddar cheese and sprinkle evenly over both halves of the stuffed squash. Top the cheddar with slices of the Mozzarella. Place the squash back into the oven until the cheddar is nicely browned and the Mozzarella is bubbling.

This makes a great vegetarian dish or, without the cheese topping, can be used as an accompanying dish to almost any meat or fish that you fancy.