

Acorn squash with sundried tomato polenta

Submitted by Nicole Narbonne

2 small acorn squash (1 to 1 1/2 lbs. each)

About 2 oz. or 15 sun-dried tomatoes

1/4 cup pine nuts

3 to 4 cloves garlic, minced or pressed

1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese - or soy Parmesan

1/4 cup plus 2 Tbs. extra virgin olive oil

2 1/2 cups vegetable stock

1/2 heaping tsp. salt

1/2 cup coarse-ground polenta

2 to 3 Tbs. shredded Parmesan Cheese

Paprika for garnish

2 Tbs. chopped parsley

Preheat oven to 350F. Line sheet pan with parchment paper, and spray liberally with nonstick vegetable oil. Cut squashes in half crosswise, and scoop out seeds and a little extra flesh. Cook, face down on parchment paper, about 45 minutes, or until sharp knife easily penetrates outside skin and rim of flesh is lightly browned

Meanwhile, in small bowl, soak tomatoes in very hot water to cover for 15 to 20 minutes. When soft, coarsely chop and set aside. On small sheet pan or in baking dish, toast pine nuts in oven for about 10 minutes, or until lightly browned. Remove and set aside.

To make pesto, in food processor, add pine nuts, garlic, sun-dried tomatoes and grated Parmesan cheese. Start machine and, as blade is turning, pour olive oil through shoot. Blend into smooth paste. Set aside in small bowl. (Use same bowl, rinsed and dried, used for soaking tomatoes).

Bring stock to a boil in medium to heavy saucepan. Add salt, keeping water boiling at medium-high heat. Add polenta gradually, either slowly from measuring cup or letting a fistful run through nearly closed fingers, constantly stirring with long-handled whisk. When all polenta is added, reduce heat to medium-low, and cook gently. Continue stirring, switching to long-handled wooden spoon. To avoid burning or sticking, use heat-diffusing device. Stir continuously and thoroughly, bringing mixture up from bottom and loosening from sides. (Make sure sides are scooped clean.)

Continue to stir for about 20 minutes, or until polenta is creamy and pulls away from sides of pan. Turn off heat, and stir in sun-dried tomato pesto.

Remove Squash from oven. Spoon tomato mixture into Squash "bowls." Top with shredded Parmesan, dust with paprika and garnish with parsley.