

The DISH



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Oh summer, how I love you! Besides the warm sun, I especially love all the fresh veggies you provide daily in my garden. And the first thing that happens to be ready in my garden is summer squash — that yellow cousin to the zucchini, which can really grow like crazy and produce so much that I can't keep up eating it. I really try to stay on top of picking squash each day and then I miss a day and "wowza" do I have baskets of squash. But I'm not going to complain. I spiralized a lot of it last year and threw it in the freezer to enjoy all winter long and that's exactly what I plan on doing again this year. Besides veggies, I also have an herb garden so I'll definitely be trying recipes which incorporate using my fresh herbs, such as basil and mint. Happy summer gardening!

Summer Squash Casserole

- 6 Tbsp. butter, divided, plus more for a pan
- 10 medium yellow squash, sliced
- 1 yellow onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, chopped
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- ½ cup whole milk
- 2 cups cheddar cheese, grated
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 2 cups crumbled butter crackers
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter a 9-by-13-inch baking dish.

Melt 4 Tbsp. butter in a large pot over medium heat. Add squash, onion and garlic. Season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until just tender, 12 to 15 minutes. Drain and roughly chop mixture; reserve.

Add soup and milk to pot and cook until warm, 1 to 2 minutes. Whisk in cheese, half cup at a time, until melted. Stir in egg and reserved squash mixture. Transfer mixture to prepared baking dish.

Melt remaining 2 Tbsp. butter. Add crackers and toss to coat. Sprinkle over casserole. Bake until golden and bubbly, 35 to 40 minutes. Serve warm.

Skillet Pasta with Summer Squash, Ricotta and Basil

- 1 lb. pasta (such as penne or rigatoni)
- 2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 sweet onion, thinly sliced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 summer squash, thinly sliced
- 1½ cups halved yellow cherry tomatoes
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/3 cup finely grated Pecorino Romano
- 1 cup ricotta cheese
- ¼ cup chopped fresh basil

Fill a large skillet with water and salt it generously. Bring it to a boil over high heat. Once it's boiling, add the pasta and cook according to the instructions on the package.

Drain the pasta and set aside, reserving ¾ cup of the pasta cooking water. In the same skillet, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onion and sauté until tender, 4 to 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, 1 minute more.

Add the squash and tomatoes and cook until both are tender, 4 to 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

Add the reserved pasta water to the mixture and toss well to coat, then add the pasta and stir. Sprinkle in the Pecorino Romano and stir again to combine. Dollop the ricotta on top of the pasta and garnish with basil. Serve immediately.

Cherry Tomato & Summer Squash Pasta

- ½ pound whole grain rotini or fusilli or penne pasta
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes
- 2 medium yellow squash, quartered vertically and then sliced into ¼-inch wide wedges
- 1 medium zucchini, quartered vertically and then sliced into ¼-inch wide wedges
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 2 Tbsp. butter or olive oil
- 1 oz. goat cheese, crumbled
- 1 small clove garlic, pressed or minced
- Pinch red pepper flakes
- 1 to 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh basil

Preheat oven to 400 degrees and line a large, rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper for easy cleanup. On the baking sheet, toss the whole cherry tomatoes and sliced zucchini and squash with 2 Tbsp. olive oil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and arrange in a single layer (or as close to a single layer as possible). Roast for about 25 minutes, tossing halfway, until the cherry tomatoes have burst and the squash is tender.

Meanwhile, bring a pot of salted water to boil and cook the pasta until al dente, according to package directions. Before draining the pasta, reserve about 1 cup of the pasta cooking water. Drain the pasta and return it to the pot.

While the pasta is hot, add the lemon juice, butter, goat cheese, garlic and red pepper flakes to the pot. Add about ¼ cup of the reserved pasta cooking water and gently toss the pasta until the ingredients are evenly mixed together and the pasta is coated in a light sauce (add more reserved cooking water if the pasta seems dry).

Once the tomatoes and squash are out of the oven, add them to the pot along with all of the tomato juices.

Gently toss once again to combine. Season to taste with salt and freshly ground pepper, then sprinkle chopped basil over the pasta and divide into individual serving bowls. Serve immediately.

Roasted Summer Squash with Lemon, Mint & Feta

- 5 small yellow summer squash or zucchini, about 8 inches long
- ¼ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- ½ cup very finely chopped mint, or more (measure after chopping)
- Salt, to taste
- 1 cup crumbled Feta cheese (more or less to taste)
- Fresh-ground black pepper, to taste

Preheat oven to 475 degrees and put oven rack as high as it will go. Spray a baking sheet with non-stick spray.

Wash squash and cut off stem and flower ends. Cut each squash into quarters lengthwise, then cut into pieces about 2 inches long.

Combine olive oil, lemon juice, mint and salt; then put that mixture into a plastic bowl and toss squash with the mixture. Arrange squash on roasting pan, in a single layer as much as possible.

Roast squash, turning every 15-20 minutes, until slightly browned and cooked to your liking. I turned my squash twice, with a total cooking time of 40 minutes, but I would start checking after 35 minutes.

When the squash is done, put it back into the same bowl and toss with the Feta cheese. Season with fresh-ground black pepper to taste. This can be served hot or at room temperature.

Taco Stuffed Summer Squash Boats

- 4 medium summer squash, cut in half lengthwise
- ½ cup salsa
- 1 lb. lean ground turkey or beef
- 1 Tbsp. taco seasoning
- ½ small onion, chopped fine
- ¼ cup bell pepper, chopped fine
- 4 oz. can tomato sauce
- ¼ cup water
- ½ cup reduced fat Mexican blend shredded cheese
- ¼ cup chopped scallions or cilantro, for topping

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Using a spoon, scrape out the seeds of the squash.

Place the squash in the boiling water for 1 minute, then place on a paper towel to drain.

Spoon ¼ cup salsa into the bottom of a large baking dish and arrange squash face up. Set aside.

Brown turkey or beef in a large skillet until no longer pink. Add seasoning, onion, pepper, tomato sauce and water and stir to combine. Cover and simmer 20 minutes.

Fill each squash boat with the turkey or beef mixture, then top with cheese. Cover with foil and bake 35 minutes or until squash is soft and cheese is melted. Garnish and serve with salsa.