Butternut Squash Soup Two Ways: Oven-Roasted or Instant Pot

Prep: 25 minutes | Cook: 70-90 minutes | Makes: 12-16 bowls

Creamy butternut squash soup with tart Granny Smith apples, sweet onions, maple syrup, and warming spices. Roast the squash for a deeper, richer flavor, or use the Instant Pot when you really want soup on a weeknight.

Ingredients

For both versions

• Butternut squash: A) 3 whole butternut squashes, scrubbed clean, cut in half, seeded, and left unpeeled, for roasting; B) 3 packages of precut, prepeeled squash for the Instant Pot

• 2 sweet onions, diced

• 2 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored, and diced

• 2 large cloves garlic, minced

• 4 tablespoons salted butter (½ stick)

• 1 cup heavy cream (½ pint)

• 2 boxes low-sodium chicken broth or stock (32 fluid ounces each)

• 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

• ⅓ cup pure maple syrup

• 1 teaspoon paprika

• 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

• ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg

• 1 teaspoon fine salt to start, plus more to taste

• ½ teaspoon black pepper, plus more to taste

To serve, optional

• Crusty bread

• Your favorite hot sauce

• Sour cream, crème fraîche, or a little heavy cream

• Fresh sage leaves, a little extra butter, and flaky sea salt for the star garnish

• Finely chopped chives or thinly sliced scallions

• Toasted pepitas, garlic croutons, or crumbled crisp bacon

The roasted version

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees (205 degrees Celsius).

2. Place the unpeeled, seeded squash halves on a baking sheet with the cut sides facing up. Pour the olive oil over the cut surfaces, letting it pool in the scooped-out seed cavities. Sprinkle with salt, pepper, and paprika. Roast cut side up for 50-70 minutes, until the squash and its skin are fully tender and lightly caramelized; a knife should slide easily into the thickest part. Large halves may need longer.

3. Once the roasted squash has cooled enough to handle, place it-skin and all-in a large pot. Using clean hands or a potato masher, mash the squash until smooth, removing and discarding any remaining hard or tough pieces.

4. In a separate pan, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the onions, apples, minced garlic, salt, and black pepper, and sauté until the onions and apples are softened, about 10-15 minutes.

5. Add the sautéed onion-and-apple mixture to the pot with the mashed butternut squash. Warm both boxes of chicken broth or stock separately.

6. Add the heavy cream, maple syrup, cinnamon, and nutmeg to the pot. Use an immersion blender to blend everything together, adding the warmed broth or stock 1 cup at a time until the soup reaches the consistency you want. You may not need all of the broth.

7. Bring the soup to a gentle simmer and cook for 20 minutes so all of the flavors come together. Taste and season with additional salt and black pepper if needed.

8. Serve with crusty bread and the garnish of your choice-ideally beside a fire in the fireplace.

Estimated nutrition

Per 1/16 roasted recipe, without bread or toppings: Calories About 220; Protein About 4 g; Total fat About 10 g; Saturated fat About 5.5 g; Cholesterol About 25 mg; Sodium About 170 mg; Total carbs About 32 g; Fiber About 5 g; Total sugars About 13 g; Added sugar About 4 g.

The Instant Pot Version

For a weeknight when you really want soup and want to skip roasting. Use three packages of prepeeled, precut squash. Pressure cook on High for 10 minutes, allowing additional time for the pot to reach pressure and release naturally.

1. Melt the butter in a pot over medium heat. Add the onions and apples, season with salt and pepper, and cook until softened, about 10-15 minutes. Add the minced garlic and cook for 1 minute, until fragrant.

2. Add the butternut squash and the cooked onions and apples to the Instant Pot. Pour in the 2 boxes of chicken broth or stock (32 fluid ounces each). Keep all contents at or below the maximum pressure-cooking fill line; cook in batches if needed.

3. Secure the lid and select Pressure Cook on High for 10 minutes. Let the pressure release naturally, then open the lid once the float valve has dropped.

4. Add the heavy cream, maple syrup, olive oil, paprika, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Use an immersion blender to blend until the soup reaches the consistency you want. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

5. Serve with crusty bread and any of the optional finishers below.

Star garnish for either version

Crispy butter-fried sage

Melt a little butter in a pan over low heat. Add individual sage leaves and cook until crispy. Lift the leaves out of the butter, sprinkle with a little flaky sea salt, and use them to garnish the soup.

If you like, swirl in a little sour cream, crème fraîche, or heavy cream. Use a light hand-too much will dilute the soup’s flavor.

The finishing touch for either version

Finish each bowl with a few dashes of your favorite hot sauce, a dollop of sour cream, or a sprinkle of chives or scallions. Matty’s suggestions: toasted pepitas for crunch, garlic croutons for dipping and scooping, or a little crumbled crisp bacon for a savory finish. Add toppings just before serving. A bowl of this, some good bread, and a fire in the fireplace is my idea of a perfect chilly evening.

Bone broth option

You can substitute plain chicken bone broth for the low-sodium chicken stock or broth to substantially increase the soup’s protein while keeping a similar flavor. Protein content and flavor vary by brand.

Freezing

This soup freezes perfectly in one large freezer-safe container or portioned into individual containers for easy reheating in the microwave.