

SUMMER SQUASH STUFFED WITH MUSHROOMS, PEPITAS, AND GOAT CHEESE

Serves 2 to 4

I could lie to you and tell you this is a Mexican dish. Maybe you'd even believe it. But the truth is that it's Mexican only in my mind's eye (or, more accurately, mouth). It's what I imagine food to taste like—what I want it to taste like—in Mexico. Garlicky tomatoes and mushrooms with the heat of chiles and the freshness of limes and cilantro get the toasty crunch of pepitas. Baked in summer squash boats, the mix becomes an elegant vegetarian main dish.

Ingredients:

2 long slender summer squash, such as zucchini or yellow squash
Jacobsen flake finishing sea salt
Extra-virgin olive oil
2 limes
12 fresh shiitake mushrooms, stemmed, caps cut into 1/4-inch slices
5 sun-dried tomatoes, very thinly sliced
1 garlic clove, cut into thin slivers
3 tablespoons pepitas (hulled pumpkin seeds)
1/2 red finger chile, seeded, if desired, very thinly sliced
1/2 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
2 ounces goat cheese

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 400°F.

Cut the squash in half lengthwise. Use a spoon to scoop out the seeds and create boats with 1/8 inch of flesh all around the edges. Set the squash on a rimmed baking sheet, cut-sides up. Sprinkle salt all over the squash, then drizzle with olive oil. Zest the limes on top.

Roast the squash for 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Lightly coat the bottom of the pan with olive oil. Add the mushrooms, stir well, then add the sun-dried tomatoes. Cook, stirring, for 30 seconds, then add the garlic. Add more oil if the pan looks dry; the mushrooms have a tendency to soak up the oil. Cook, stirring, for 1 minute.

Add the pepitas and cook, stirring, for 1 minute, then add the chile and a big pinch of salt. Stir well, then remove from the heat. Squeeze in the juice of 1 lime and stir well, then stir in the cilantro.

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Divide the mixture among the roasted squash cavities. Return to the oven and roast just to heat through and meld the flavors a bit, 2 to 4 minutes. You want the squash to still have a little crunch.

Crumble the goat cheese on top and serve immediately.