

Honey Bourbon Butternut Squash Soup from *Urban Sacred Garden*



This soup tastes like the perfect Fall day. And the salty beer cheese croutons (which I also recommend for about any soup, particularly tomato) perfectly compliment the sweet honey, apples and bourbon in the soup. The worst part of the whole process is peeling and chopping the Butternut squash. It is the worst for me, and a very good job for your hubby or boyfriend. Once that is done this recipe is easy as pie. You can purchase pre-cut squash this time of year, but you definitely lose the flavor. Yield: About 6 Servings

INGREDIENTS

FOR SOUP

- 1 Large Butternut Squash, de-skinned, de-seeded and cut into cubes*
- 1 Large Apple, de-skinned, de-cored and cut into cubes
- 2 Shallots, diced
- 1/2 Cup Local Honey
- 3 Tbsp Olive Oil
- Fresh Ground Sea Salt
- Fresh Ground Black Pepper
- 3 Tbsp Butter
- 1/4 Cup Evan Williams Honey Reserve Bourbon (this is a sweet flavored Bourbon, if using Maker's Mark, Woodford Reserve, Jim Beam, or other traditional Bourbon reduce amount to 1/8 Cup)
- 3/4 Cup Apple Cider (buy local made, 100% juice, no sugar added)
- 2 1/2 Cups Vegetable Stock (I recommend Kitchen Basics Unsalted Vegetable Stock)
- 1/4 Cup Heavy Cream
- 5 Tbsp Worcestershire (I recommend Bourbon Barrel Aged from Bourbon Barrel Foods it is a tasty, sweet Worcestershire sauce and some of the best I've ever had)**

FOR BEER CHEESE CROUTONS

- Whole Grain Cocktail Bread (or other very thin sliced bread)
- Beer Cheese***
- Butter for cooking

*Save seeds for Roasted Butternut Squash Seeds.

**I used a vegetarian Worcestershire. Not all varieties are vegetarian, so if you need it all veggie based be aware of ingredients.

*** Beer Cheese is very popular here in the Bluegrass. If it is unavailable in your hometown you can also use Pimento Cheese or make your own Beer Cheese. I recommend Peggy's Beer Cheese recipe at *My Fiancé Likes It So It Must Be Good!*.

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. In a large roasting pan combine Butternut Squash, Apple, Shallots, Honey, Olive Oil, Salt and Pepper. Toss, ensuring Squash and Apples are thoroughly coated. Cut 3 Tbsp Butter into

small pieces and scatter across the top of Squash Mixture. Place in the oven and roast for about 45 minutes, stirring occasionally to ensure even cooking and prevent drying of any pieces. Cook until squash is soft.

2. Remove pan from oven. Add Honey Bourbon to roasting pan and stir around to deglaze and get as much of the crusty goodies out of the pan as possible. Pour Bourbon Squash Mixture into a large stove top soup pan. Add Apple Cider and Vegetable Stock. Use an immersion blender (or hand mixer) to puree until smooth and most chunks are gone. If you want a thinner texture add more Stock if needed.

3. Once soup is pureed completely add Heavy Cream and Worcestershire. Add Salt as needed for taste (don't be afraid of salt!). Stir occasionally over low heat and bring soup to a slow boil.

4. As soup is heating prepare Beer Cheese Croutons. Melt 1 Tbsp Butter in a small sauté pan over medium low heat. Cut thin sliced bread into little one inch squares. Make mini sandwiches by spreading Beer Cheese (or Pimento Cheese) and layering between two pieces of bread. Place mini sandwiches in melted butter and cook until brown and crispy on first side, flip and cook until second side is browned and crispy. Remove from heat onto a small plate. Continue to make small batches until you have enough croutons. Add more butter to pan as needed for cooking. The butter makes the mini sandwich croutons crisp and golden.

5. Once soup is finished ladle into individual bowls, sprinkle with a little Balsamic or Blood Orange Vinegar (if wanted), add Fresh Ground Pepper, and Beer Cheese Croutons. Serve warm. Enjoy!



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