



## Winter Squash Soup

Serves 4 to 6

You can use any kind of winter squash for this recipe, but butternut is the easiest to peel. Peel the squash first, then carefully halve it by gently rocking the edge of your knife into the squash before applying any pressure to avoid slipping. Then cut it into chunks.

- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
  - 4 tablespoons olive oil, divided
  - 1 small onion, peeled and sliced
  - 2 garlic cloves, crushed
  - Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
  - 2-3 medium carrots, peeled and sliced (about 1 cup)
  - 1 stalk celery, sliced (about 3/4 cup)
  - 1 large leek, sliced and washed (about 2 cups)
  - 2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary
  - 1 small butternut squash (about 2 pounds), peeled and seeded, or a 20-ounce package of peeled squash
  - 4 cups chicken or vegetable stock
  - 2-4 tablespoons cream or milk
  - 1/4 cup pepitas (pumpkin seeds)
  - 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
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1. Heat a large saucepan over medium heat. Add butter and 1 tablespoon of the oil. Add onion and garlic, season with salt and pepper, and cook about 5 minutes, until starting to soften. Add carrots, celery, leeks, and rosemary, season again, and cook 5 minutes longer, stirring frequently, until softened.
  2. Add the squash and stock and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer. Partially cover the saucepan so that the liquid that collects on the lid goes back into the pot, and cook for 30-40 minutes, or until squash is soft. Test this by pressing a piece against the side of the pot; it should easily dissolve. Let soup cool slightly in the pot, uncovered.
  3. Meanwhile, make the toasted pepitas: Pour the remaining 3 tablespoons of oil into a small (8-inch) skillet and heat over medium heat. Add the pepitas and cook until they sizzle and pop and start to brown, about 3 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, scoop them out and onto a folded paper towel and sprinkle with salt. Pour the oil from the pan into a small bowl and add the paprika. Mix well and set aside.
  4. Transfer half the contents of the soup pot to a blender and puree until smooth. Return the blended half to a clean pot and puree the remaining vegetable mixture. When ready to serve, reheat and add as much cream or milk as you need to thin to the desired consistency. You can also use stock or water to thin as needed. Season to taste.
  5. Ladle into bowls and top each serving with a sprinkle of pepitas and a drizzle of paprika oil.
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## Notes:

- If you have remaining paprika oil, try it drizzled over roasted potatoes or other roasted veggies.
- A high-speed blender like a Vitamix (totally worth the investment!) works best to make the smoothest soups, but any blender will work, including an immersion blender, which you can use right in the pot! Less dishes to wash!
- Don't use a food processor, which can leak!
- When using a blender to puree hot soup, remember these safety tips:
  - Let the soup cool for at least 10 minutes before pureeing, stirring as it cools to release heat.
  - Never fill the blender more than halfway.
  - Hold the cap of the lid slightly ajar to let steam escape with a dishtowel loosely draped on top (that will catch any splashes).
  - Start on low speed, gradually increasing to high.
- Like I said above, this recipe has room for substitutions or additions. Use fennel instead of celery if it's what you have on hand, or if it looks best at your farmer's market. Add some chopped cauliflower if you have it in the fridge (throw it in the pot at the same time that you add the butternut squash), or use shallots instead of leeks (although I really like the leeks here!). For extra creaminess, add some sweet potato.