

## **Squash it! Camerota's Cupboard December 2012**

Winter squash are good sources of vitamins A, C and dietary fiber. They are also rich in carotenoids that act as antioxidants in the body and may help improve immune function. There is probable evidence that diets high in carotenoids may lower your risk for cancers of the mouth, pharynx, larynx and lung.

### **Spaghetti Squash with Fresh Tomato Sauce**

(from AICR, The American Institute for Cancer Research)

This recipe features spaghetti squash, named for the thin, noodle-like strands that are created from scraping its cooked flesh. A little bland on its own, this winter vegetable goes great with the fresh tomatoes and garlic featured in this recipe. Tomatoes add a boost of cancer-protection with the antioxidant lycopene and provide vitamins A, C and potassium. Garlic belongs to the allium family of vegetables and research has linked its consumption with a decreased risk for colorectal cancer.

1 small spaghetti squash (about 2 lbs.)

2 lbs. vine-ripe tomatoes (or use lo-sodium, canned, peeled, tomatoes)

1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil

1/2 cup finely chopped onion

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

Pinch of dried red pepper flakes

1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. each dried basil and oregano

Freshly ground black pepper

- Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Pierce the squash in half-a-dozen places with a thin knife. Bake the squash on a piece of foil in the oven until it yields slightly when firmly pressed, 50 to 60 minutes. You can also cook spaghetti squash in a microwave for 20-40 minutes, depending on size.

- Meanwhile, peel the tomatoes using a swivel-bladed vegetable peeler with serrated blade. Halve, seed and dice the peeled tomatoes. Reserve.
- Heat the oil in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onion and sauté until translucent, about four minutes. Mix in the garlic and cook another two minutes, stirring constantly. Add the tomatoes, red pepper flakes, salt, basil and oregano. Cook, stirring until the tomatoes are tender and floating in juices (but still hold their shape), about five minutes. Season to taste with black pepper. Halve the baked squash horizontally. Scrape out and discard the seeds. Using a fork, scrape out the squash in strands. Divide four cups of the squash among four deep pasta bowls. Spoon one-fourth of the sauce over the squash in each bowl. Serve immediately.

**Makes 4 servings.**

**Nutrition information per serving:** 140 calories; 5g total fat (<1g saturated fat); 25g carbohydrate; 4g protein; 6g dietary fiber; 347mg sodium.

## **Winter Butternut Squash and Sweet Pepper Soup**

(also from AICR)

Usher in the cooler weather and shorter days with this velvety butternut squash and orange bell pepper soup. Enjoy this comforting soup with the whole family or in a thermos for lunch. This versatile vegetable soup adds garlic and paprika to round out the flavors, which makes it both savory and satisfying.

- 1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 medium leek, white part only, chopped
- 1 large orange bell pepper, seeded and diced
- 4 cups diced butternut squash
- 1 tsp. chopped garlic
- 1 tsp. sweet Hungarian paprika
- 3 cups fat free, reduced-sodium chicken broth

1/4 cup orange juice

salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1/4 cup raw pumpkin seeds, crushed (for garnish)

1/8 tsp. Spanish paprika, smoked or sweet, (optional, for garnish)

- Heat oil in medium Dutch oven or heavy, large saucepan over medium-high heat. Sauté leeks until translucent (about 4 minutes).
- Add bell pepper, squash and pinch of salt, stirring to coat with oil.
- Reduce heat, cover and cook vegetables gently to release juices, 10 minutes.
- Stir in garlic and paprika for 30 seconds, until fragrant. Add broth, increase heat and bring liquid to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer soup until vegetables are soft, about 20 minutes.
- Uncover, and let soup cool for 10 minutes.
- Transfer soup to blender, cover and whirl soup to a velvet puree.
- Blend in orange juice and season to taste with salt and pepper.
- To serve, divide soup among four soup bowls. Place pumpkin seeds in a dry skillet over medium-high heat and cook, shaking and swirling the pan, until seeds are plump and mostly golden. Crush seeds and add to soup as garnish. If using, sprinkle Spanish paprika. Serve immediately.

**Makes 4 servings.**

**Nutrition information per serving:** 250 calories; 10g total fat (1.5g. saturated fat); 37g carbohydrate; 9g protein; 7g dietary fiber; 430 mg. sodium

### **Skillet Acorn Squash**

(from The Nutrition Council of Greater Cincinnati's book, *More Nutritious Still Delicious*)

Serve this side dish with a green vegetable and some red fruit to pack your plate with powerful phytochemicals, which research suggests may help fight many common chronic diseases.

1 large acorn squash, about 2 pounds

½ cup apple or orange juice  
1 Tbsp. butter (or canola or olive oil)  
¼ tsp. ground cinnamon

- Trim ends off squash. Stand squash on end; cut in half lengthwise. Remove seeds and fiber. Reserve seeds for roasting. Cut each squash half crosswise into ½ inch thick slices.
- In a large skillet, combine juice, butter or oil and cinnamon. Mix well. Add squash slices; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer 10 minutes.
- Turn slices; cover and simmer until squash is tender, an additional 5 to 8 minutes.

**Makes 4 servings**

**Nutrition information per serving:** 131 calories; 2g protein; 27g carbohydrate; 4g dietary fiber; 3g fat; 2g saturated fat; 0mg cholesterol; 28mg sodium