

Butternut squash with Fried Sage Leaves

Created by one of my favorite cooks, Deborah Madison.

2 ½ - 3 lbs. Butternut squash

¼ cup olive oil

6 garlic cloves, unpeeled

12 whole fresh sage leaves, + 2 Tbsp. chopped

2 onions, finely chopped

salata,

Chopped leaves from 4 thyme sprigs or ¼ tsp. dried

¼ cup parsley

Salt & pepper

2 qts. Water or Veggie stock

(recipe available at www.sbveggies.com)

½ cup Fontina, pecorino, or ricotta

diced into small cubes

Preheat oven to 375°F. Halve the squash and scoop out the seeds. Brush the surfaces with oil, stuff the cavities with garlic, and place them cut sides down on a baking sheet. Bake until tender when pressed with a finger, about 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a small skillet, heat the ¼ cup oil until nearly smoking, then drop in the whole sage leaves and fry until speckled and dark, about 1 minute. Set the leaves aside on a paper towel and transfer the oil to a wide soup pot. Add the onions, chopped sage, thyme, and parsley and cook over medium heat until the onions have begun to brown around the edges, 12 to 15 minutes. Scoop the squash flesh into the pot along with any juices that have accumulated in the pan. Peel the garlic and add it to the pot along with 1 ½ teaspoons salt and water. Bring to a boil. Simmer at low heat, partially covered for 25 minutes. Add more water to thin if needed. Salt to taste.

Depending on the type of squash you've used, the soup will be smooth or rough. Purée for a more refined soup. Garnish each bowl with cheese, fried sage leaves, add pepper.