

Toro Bravo

Harissa-Stewed Butternut Squash

SERVES 6-8

This is our all-time most requested recipe and it's also one of our simplest—a hybrid Spanish/Southern casserole. Note that I didn't say *easy*, I said *simple*. Yes, you have to peel all of the butternut squash, deseed, and dice it. No, you can't cook it and then peel it.

1. Slice the squash in half, peel it, scoop out the seeds and chop it into a ½-inch dice.
2. Put 2 large sauté pans over medium-high heat and put 2 tablespoons of butter into each. Get the butter just to the beginning of browning.
3. Split the squash between the 2 pans, and season each pan with salt and pepper. Let the squash cook, untouched, for 3 minutes. The squash's caramelization in the hot sauté pan is super important to the final flavor. You want it almost charred and just slightly burnt.
4. After 3 minutes—once it's nicely browned—spoon the squash into one pan, discarding the butter that remains in the emptied pan.
5. Put 1 tablespoon of olive oil in the emptied pan and add the onion and garlic and sauté, stirring regularly, until they get a bit of color, about 1 or 2 minutes.
6. Spoon the squash back into the onion/garlic pan, leaving a lot of the butter behind.
7. Add the rose petal harissa and heavy cream and stir to incorporate. Cook for 1 or 2 minutes.
8. Make sure that the squash is cooked through, the sauce is a good consistency, and the seasoning is to your liking, and remove it from the heat.
NOTE: At this point you can put the recipe on hold, refrigerate it, and finish it the next day.
9. Divide the squash mix into 2 cazuelas or other shallow baking dishes.
10. Take half the fresh sheep cheese and put 3 evenly placed scoops on the top of one dish. Do the same for the other dish.
11. Broil the squash for 3 or 4 minutes or until the cheese is nicely browned. Serve right away.

1 medium butternut squash, 2 to 3 lbs
4 tablespoons butter
Salt and pepper
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 medium yellow onion, julienned
5 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
2 tablespoons rose petal harissa, or more to taste
1½ cups heavy cream
¾ cup fresh sheep cheese or fromage blanc

