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Baby pumpkins stuffed with cranberry-wild rice pilaf

By Susie Iventosch



(Serve 4)

Ingredients

4 baby pumpkins (or mini honey boat or sweet dumpling squash)

1 cup wild rice blend, cooked according to directions (Lundberg makes a good wild-brown rice blend).

You want to have about two cups of cooked rice.

1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 teaspoon cranberry-maple rub (optional)

1/2 cup dried cranberries

3 tablespoon orange juice (or try tossing in Mandarin orange segments)

1 tablespoon fresh herbs, minced (thyme, rosemary, and/or sage), or

1 teaspoon dried Italian herbs

1/2 cup pecans, toasted and coarsely chopped

Salt and Pepper to taste

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly mist a casserole dish (large enough to hold pumpkins or squash) with cooking spray. If using mini pumpkins, place whole in casserole dish and if using larger squash or pumpkins, cut in half, remove seeds and place cut side

Stuffed pumpkins Photo Susie Iventosch

down in dish.

Bake whole pumpkins for 45 minutes or squash halves for about 25-30 minutes, or until knife easily pierces through skin and meat. Remove from oven and cool to room temperature. Then slice off the pumpkins tops and scoop out seeds and stringy stuff, leaving pulp intact. (This has been done already if you're using squash or larger pumpkins.)

While pumpkins are baking, cook the rice according to directions. Set aside.

Meanwhile, heat olive oil in a saut•pan, add onion and cook over medium heat until translucent. Add dried cranberries and continue to cook over medium-high heat, until onions and cranberries begin to brown. Add rub and herbs and toss well to coat. Remove from heat. Stir in rice and orange juice and mix well. Toss in toasted pecans.

Spoon rice mixture into pumpkin or squash cavities and place pumpkin lids on top. Can be prepared a day ahead and refrigerated.

When ready to serve, reheat for about 20 minutes in a 350 degree oven.

NOTE

Cranberry-maple rub is excellent on salmon or poultry and makes a wonderful rub for your Thanksgiving turkey. Unfortunately, I haven't been able to locate it in local stores, but here are two online sources. These sites are fun to peruse, as they have so many interesting rubs, spices and herbs!

Two Spicy Ladies: <http://twospicyladies.com/id2.html>, (916) 765-3717

Galena Garlic Company: <http://www.thegalenagourmet.com>, (815) 777-9625



A variety of winter squash can be substituted for the mini pumpkins. Clockwise from top: Sugar Pie pumpkin, yellow mini pumpkin, Delicata or Honey Boat squash, orange Acorn squash (in center), Jack Be Little pumpkin, Sweet Dumpling Squash Photo Susie Iventosch

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