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Share the warmth of holidays with this perfect pumpkin sage soup

By *Susie Iventosch*



Pumpkin sage soup Photo provided

Roasted shallots and kale make a perfect garnish for whichever type of squash you choose for your soup.

Note regarding last week's column: When you toss the cauliflower with the olive oil, add the buffalo wing sauce at the same time to coat cauliflower before baking.

By late October, pumpkin and spice flavors are enticing and almost irresistible. Maybe it's those sugar pumpkins staring at you from the produce stand, or perhaps it's the fall leaves as they turn orange, crimson and gold. Whatever it is, you know when it's happened!

This year, I had a craving for pumpkin soup, and then decided it would be lovely to have a pumpkin cookie for dessert, so we have two recipes this week for your fall and holiday cooking. I first made the soup with a kabocha squash, which looks a lot like a green pumpkin on the outside, but with pumpkin-colored flesh. Then, I bought a pie pumpkin (a variety of sugar pumpkin) at Trader Joe's and thought that was even better!

This soup can be made with your favorite squash (kabocha, butternut or acorn, etc.) or sugar or pie pumpkins. Baking pumpkins such as sugar pumpkins have thinner skin, fewer seeds and less stringy pulp than the decorative variety, and are therefore better for

Pumpkin Sage Soup

(Serves 4-6)

INGREDIENTS

2 sugar or pie pumpkins (to yield approximately 4 cups pumpkin meat or any kind of squash you prefer)

3 Tbsp. olive oil

3 shallots, peeled (two chopped and one thinly sliced for garnish)

1 small onion, peeled and chopped

1 tsp. poultry seasoning

1 tsp. dried sage

1/2 tsp. dried thyme

2 Tbsp. dry sherry

1 can low-fat or non-fat coconut milk (13.5 or 14 oz.)

3 to 4 cups chicken broth, depending on how thick or thin you prefer your soup

Salt and pepper to taste

1 cup kale leaves for garnish (plus sliced shallot from above)

DIRECTIONS

Remove the stem from the pumpkins (or squash) and cut in half. Scoop out seeds and pulp. Coat inside of flesh with a thin layer of olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Turn upside down on a greased baking sheet and bake at 350 F until skin and flesh are easily pierced with a knife. Remove from oven and cool. Scoop out pulp and place in a bowl.

Meanwhile, sauté chopped shallots and onion in a large pot. Add seasonings and continue to cook until onions are translucent. Add pumpkin pulp and mix well with veggies. Puree this mixture in a food processor one batch at a time until smooth. Return to soup pot.

Add sherry, coconut milk and enough chicken broth to arrive at desired consistency. Bring to a boil and serve immediately, or cool and refrigerate until ready to heat and serve.

For garnish: Toss sliced shallots and kale leaves with olive oil and a bit of sea salt. Spread out on a tray and bake at 400 F until crispy and beginning to brown. This will take approximately 10 minutes or so. Turn them over with a spatula halfway through. Sprinkle on top of each bowl of soup. Garnish can be made several hours ahead of time.

Frosted Pumpkin Spice Cookies

INGREDIENTS

1 cup butter

2/3 cup brown sugar

1/3 cup white sugar



1 egg
1 tsp. vanilla
1 cup canned pumpkin
2 cups flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1/4 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. cinnamon
Pinch nutmeg
1/4 tsp. cardamom
1 cup raisins
1 cup chopped nuts (walnuts and pecans)
Frosting Ingredients: (can double if you like more frosting on each cookie)

1/2 stick of butter, softened to room temperature
2 Tbsp. canned pumpkin (you will have some leftover from the cookies)
2 tsp. vanilla extract
2 cups powdered sugar

DIRECTIONS

In a large mixing bowl beat butter with both sugars until fluffy. Add egg and beat well. Stir in pumpkin and vanilla extract. Mix in all dries (including spices) until well blended. Fold in raisins and chopped nuts.

Drop by large spoonful onto greased baking sheet and bake at 350 F. Remove from oven and cool completely before frosting. Store in airtight container.

For frosting: Place butter in a mixing bowl and beat until creamy. Add pumpkin and vanilla and mix well. Beat in powdered sugar a bit at a time to desired consistency. If too thick, add a bit more pumpkin and if too runny add a bit more powdered sugar.

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