

Simple way to bring delicious vitamin-packed winter squash to the table



Twice Baked Carnival Squash

Photo Susie Iventosch

By Susie Iventosch

Maybe we should first start by explaining what the heck is a carnival squash? It's a relative newcomer in the squash world, developed in 1991. Although not as commonly seen in the markets as its cousins, acorn, delicata, butternut, or other more familiar squashes, it sure is fun and festive and tastes delicious! In fact, carnival squash is a cross between the acorn and sweet dumpling squash varieties. All of these types of squash are considered winter squash. What I love about winter squash, besides its amazing flavor, is the fact

that it is low in calories and high in nutritional value, so you get plenty of vitamins A and C and a host of other "good for you" benefits.

This recipe can be made just as easily with acorn squash as carnival squash and I really love both. I do think that the carnival meat is a little bit more dense and seems to take a bit longer to cook, but both are really good. And, since I gave you such a tough assignment last week with the strawberry layer cake, you'll appreciate this one because it is super easy.

To make it even easier, I like to roast my shallots in the

same dish as the squash, so they take on that beautiful roasted flavor. The shallots will cook much faster than the squash, so take them out and set them aside after about 25 minutes. The squash will take about 40-50 minutes to get to knife-tender. Then, just toss the roasted shallots into the cavity of the cooked squash, sprinkle with grated Parmesan and roast for another 15-20 minutes, or until the cheese is melted and golden brown.



Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>

Twice Baked Carnival Squash

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

2 large carnival (or acorn) squash
1/2 teaspoon each: salt, pepper and lemon pepper
2 large or 4 small shallots, peeled and cut into eighths, lengthwise
2 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 375 F. Spray a 9x13 baking dish with cooking spray.

Cut squash in half from top to bottom, so each half is more or less a heart shape. Remove seeds and any stringy pulp and season the cavities with salt, pepper and lemon pepper.

Place squash, cut side down, into the prepared baking dish. Toss the shallots in the olive oil and spread out in the dish next to the squash.

Roast squash for anywhere from 35-50 minutes, depending upon the thickness. Mine took the full 50 minutes. The shallots will be ready sooner, so check on them at about the 25-minute mark. They should be nice and browned. Remove shallots and set aside while the squash finishes baking.

Once the squash is tender when a knife is inserted in the center, it is done. Remove the squash from the oven and invert so that the cavity side is now up. You can prepare the squash to this point several hours ahead of time, or even a day or two. If you prefer, you can also cut each squash half in half again, so each squash yields four smaller pieces. Only do this after it is roasted.

When ready to serve, arrange the shallots in the bottom of the cavity and sprinkle Parmesan cheese evenly into the center of the squash and also on the top of the sides. Bake at 375 F for another 15-20 minutes, or until the squash is hot and the cheese is turning golden brown. Serve hot.



Good grief

By Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC

When you fight hard, you seek out every possible resource and engage a great team. But then your family member dies and you feel you didn't do all you could. We end up feeling guilty, even knowing that this is part of the process and it can hit us hard.

I lost two of my younger brothers in the past five months; I have every resource at my disposal and years and years of helping families find answers to challenging situations, but still all my advice to my sisters-in-law did not change the trajectory of their illnesses. I feel sad, I miss them, I feel empathy toward my wonderful sisters-in-law, but there is this pang of guilt that I should have done something else.

Now my rational brain, the trained therapist, comes in with: "Well this is just part of grief." Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

wrote a book on the grief process many years ago. In the book she goes into detail about the process of grief being: denial, bargaining, guilt, depression and acceptance. Again my rational brain says that is all fine, but I still feel like I should have done more or had an answer that none of the many physicians and stellar medical facilities could come up with.

It's easy to see how guilt can lead to depression, but we just can't stop the process of life that includes death. In my circle of friends and family I realize that I am not alone. A friend recently lost a dad to Alzheimer's disease. She is an expert in that field and could not make a difference on his final days. I have another friend who is a retired medical professional struggling to find answers for a family member with severe mental illness.

For those of you not trained in mental or medical health, it is just as hard. Getting out of these stuck places in the

grief journey really takes a mini-village of sorts. A support group or someone to talk this through is one of the best treatments for grief. Just being validated for your feelings, whatever they are, can be comforting.

All of us know that with time, grief becomes less painful. Your memories of the family member take over and give you pause for a smile or a laugh. This does not mean that there is a little part of your heart that is missing. It just means you have gotten to "acceptance," not "forgetfulness." Love endures.

This column is about good grief and that means going through the process, even if you thought you were ready and you are comforted that your family member is no longer in pain and in a better place that many of us call heaven. You can still get stuck in the grief process. I am going to call the stuck place "bad grief."

When you get stuck in any of those places that Elizabeth

Kubler-Roth wrote about, reach out to a pastor, friend, therapist or support group. You want to honor your lost family member or friend, so do an act of kindness in their name. Let them live on through your acts of kindness and love.

It is the month of Thanksgiving, begin each day with what you are grateful for in life and end each day with something you found to be grateful for in that day. This small act also helps with the grief process.

One of the issues during the grief process can be sleeplessness and trouble falling asleep or staying asleep. Next month on Dec. 10 at 11 a.m. I will be doing my Zoom class on "The Elusive Thing Called Sleep."

For information, visit www.LindaFodriniJohnson.com.



Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC, is a Licensed Family Therapist and Certified Care Manager. She has been practicing professional care management since 1984. Linda founded Eldercare Services, a full-service care management and home care company, which she sold in 2019. She continues to consult and provide therapy. Her book, "The Empowered Caregiver: Practical Advice and Emotional Support for Adult Children of Aging Parents" is available on Amazon. www.LindaFodriniJohnson.com.

Looking Good in Lamorinda

Staying warm for the holidays



Handmade hats at Busy Stix in Lafayette.

By Moya Stone

"People on the slopes want handmade hats," says Marcia Brunning, proprietor of Busy Stix in Lafayette. It's warm gear season and the trend is for handmade; and not just knit, but also crochet. Fashion designers showed crochet on the runways this year and the trend continues. Crochet instructor Liz Kaplan says that recently the look has become more popular with young women, but "crochet never went anywhere." Like knitting, the craft is always present taking different twists from year to year. We haven't seen what we call the "Granny Square" in a few decades but it's what younger women are clamoring for and they want to make it themselves, perhaps inspired by knitwear designer (and Vice

President Kamala Harris' stepdaughter) Ella Emhoff, who features her knit and crochet creations on Instagram.

Kaplan often helps Busy Stix customers with their crochet projects as well as teach the occasional class and she creates her own patterns. The shop stocks an array of crochet kits for beginners and of course there is a beautiful assortment of yarn and supplies. Are you hitting the slopes this winter? Get on this fashion trend and make yourself or someone else a warm hat. Check out the website <https://busystix.com>.

ReChic, a women's consignment shop in Orinda, offers quality clothing, accessories, and new gift items. The store is currently stocked with sweaters, boots, handbags, and a selection of new dainty jewelry just right for the current layering trend. For a unique

holiday greeting card, ReChic has cards that feature a drawing of the Orinda Theatre sign. I bought one and made it a birthday card for a friend. (Thank you to ReChic for donating 50% of the proceeds from the card sales to support the theater.) Shop owner Maureen Brown is planning some festive events including Holiday Outdoor Marketplace on Saturday, Dec. 4 from noon to 4 p.m.; more than 15 local businesses will feature various gift items. Then on Thursday, Dec. 9, 2 to 6 p.m., special guest Jenny Hill from Beautycounter, the company that has led the clean beauty revolution, will be on hand to offer tips for looking our best.

Christine Del Monica, a local hat designer from Lafayette, is selling her wares at The Spotted Cow, a pop-up vintage market in downtown Martinez. Del Monica's whimsical and festive creations are just the thing for a holiday gathering or a New Year's Eve celebration. Staying local or hitting the road, donning a hat is always appropriate. The Spotted Cow will be open Saturday, Nov. 27 and again the first weekend in December. Check them out on Facebook or Instagram.

The de Young Museum in San Francisco has reopened with the fashion exhibit, "Patrick Kelly: Runway of Love." Lafayette resident and personal stylist Francie Low

saw the exhibit and is excited to recommend it. "Patrick Kelly's southern roots inspired playful designs, elegant enough to grace a Paris runway," says Low. "It was fun to learn his mismatched button theme on sleek black dresses was inspired by his grandmother's button box. Small memories can spark remarkable creativity."

Black fashion designer Patrick Kelly (1954-1990) was known for combining whimsy with classic. Originally from Mississippi, he moved to NYC to study fashion design and in 1979 he moved to Paris. There he had friends bob around the streets in his handmade jersey outfits adorned with buttons. These colorful ensembles caught the attention of French Elle magazine and voila, he was on his way to fashion stardom. As well as 80 fully accessorized ensembles, the exhibit includes several videos of runway shows, sketches and art by the designer, and other ephemera.

Make it a holiday treat! "Patrick Kelly: Runway of Love" in on now through April 24, 2022. Masks are required and tickets are timed so it's a good idea to book ahead online at: <https://deyoung.famsf.org>.

Stay warm and go forth in style.

Moya Stone is a fashion writer and blogger at www.overdressedforlife.com.



Granny Square shawl hand crocheted by Liz Kaplan.



Orinda Theatre cards available at ReChic in Orinda.