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

By *Susie Iventosch*



Twice Baked Carnival Squash Photo 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.

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.



Photo Susie Iventosch



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