

Roasted Squash and Bean Tacos *with avocado salsa*

Recipe adapted from A School Food Revolution, Alice Waters' forthcoming school food manifesto

It's great to utilize seasonal vegetables (winter squash) within a familiar format (tacos) as a way to introduce something new to kids. Butternut squash makes a satisfying combination with the beans. Meat will not be missed but you can certainly add some grilled chicken which would be delicious.

Squash and Bean Tacos

(Makes 20 small tacos)

Ingredients

1 small butternut squash
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 tsp mild chile powder
1 teaspoon salt
½ head small red cabbage
3 carrots
1 jicama
Juice of two limes
3 cups cooked pinto beans
20 small tortillas
4 ounces queso fresco
Avocado Salsa

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Peel the squash, cut in half, and remove the seeds. Dice into 1-inch squares and toss with the vegetable oil, chile powder, and salt. Place on a rimmed baking sheet lined with parchment paper and roast in the oven until cooked through and browned, about 30 minutes.

3. Cut the cabbage into quarters, cut out the core, and cut crosswise into fine ribbons. Peel and trim the carrots and cut into fine ribbons. Peel and cut the jicama in slices about the same size and combine with the cabbage and carrots. Add the lime juice and 2 tsp salt to the cabbage salad.
4. Warm the beans.
5. To serve, put a spoonful of warm squash and beans on each tortilla and top with cabbage salad and crumbled queso fresco. Serve with avocado salsa.

Variations:

—Use other winter squash instead of butternut: delicata, dumpling, acorn, turban, kabocha, pumpkin. Or roast other seasonal vegetables in place of squash.

—Substitute other beans: black beans, borlotti, red beans, or other varieties.

Pinto Beans

(Makes 2 ¼ quarts)

Ingredients

3 cups dried pinto beans (1 ½ pounds)
1 carrot, peeled
1 onion, peeled
1 celery stalk
1 garlic bulb, cut in half
1 bay leaf
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 1/2 tablespoons kosher salt

Directions:

1. Put the pinto beans in a bowl and cover with 3 quarts cold water, refrigerate and let soak overnight.
2. When you are ready to cook the beans, drain them and pour into a pot. Add the carrot, onion, celery, garlic, bay leaf, ground cumin, and salt and cover with 3 quarts fresh cold water.
3. Cook over high heat until they come to a boil and then reduce the heat to a gentle simmer. Skim the foam that rises to surface of the water, and cook for 1 to 1 ½ hours, stirring occasionally, until the beans are completely soft and tender. The cooking time will vary depending on the age and quality of the beans.
4. Remove the aromatic vegetables before serving. Taste for salt and adjust if needed.

Variations:

—If you like, add more flavorings after the beans are cooked, such as minced garlic, onions, and oregano or marjoram softened in oil. Add fresh chiles if you like spicy beans. Drain the beans of excess liquid (save it for a soup or other use) before adding the flavorings.

Avocado Salsa

(Makes 2 cups)

Ingredients

1 ripe large avocado
1/4 cup cilantro leaves
1 garlic clove, peeled
2 teaspoons kosher salt
1 cup water
Juice of 1 lime (2 tablespoons)

Directions:

1. Peel the avocado and remove the pit. Put it in a blender with the cilantro, garlic, salt and water.
2. Purée until smooth. Add the lime juice, taste for salt and adjust if needed.