



Butternut Squash Soup with Cinnamon Crème Fraîche

Nickel & Nickel Truchard Vineyard Chardonnay, Carneros, Napa Valley

by Executive Chef Trevor Eliason

This creamy, autumn soup warms you from head to toe. At the winery, we roast our butternut squash in the wood-fired oven nearly to the point burning the outside of the squash, which imparts a delectable, caramelized characteristic that pairs beautifully with Chardonnay. This soup makes a charming “shooter” appetizer or is perfect for a first course.

Ingredients

- 1 medium butternut squash
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 quarts chicken stock
- 2-3 tablespoons kosher salt
- Freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 2 teaspoons Chinese five spice
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1-2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1/3 cup crème fraîche
- 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon

METHOD

Preheat oven to 375°F and cut the butternut squash in half lengthwise. Scoop out seeds with a large spoon. Rub the squash with olive oil and place flesh side down in a baking dish. Cover with foil and cook for 45 minutes or until very soft. Remove from oven and let cool.

Scoop the flesh into a large soup pot. Cover with 2 quarts of chicken stock. Add salt, pepper, ginger, Chinese five spice and bay leaf. Bring to a simmer, stirring occasionally for 15 minutes. Add 2 cups of heavy cream and allow the mixture to return to a simmer for 1 minute. Shut off heat.

Purée soup in a blender, adding 1 tablespoon of vinegar. Fill the blender only halfway and start it on low, then slowly bring it up to high speed. Use caution as the hot mixture will expand in the blender. Once the first batch is blended, empty the blender and blend the next batch. Continue this process until all the soup is puréed, then pass it through a sieve. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt or vinegar.

For the cinnamon crème fraîche, add a third of a cup crème fraîche to a small bowl, add cinnamon and whisk until well mixed.

For an appetizer portion, pour the hot soup into a small pitcher. Line up shot glasses, then pour soup into glasses. Top with a tiny amount of the cinnamon crème fraîche and serve. For a first course, pour soup into bowls and top with a dollop of cinnamon crème fraîche.

Serves 20 appetizer portions or 10 first course portions