

# Baked Spaghetti Squash with Tomato Sauce and Cheese

## Baked Spaghetti Squash with Tomato Sauce and Cheese

When you're craving something cozy yet light, this baked spaghetti squash hits the spot. The squash is roasted until tender, then topped with a rich tomato sauce, shredded mozzarella, and grated parmesan before being baked again until bubbly and golden. It's a beautiful Italian-inspired dish that's simple enough for a weeknight but feels special enough for Sunday dinner.

### Things to know about this Baked Spaghetti Squash with Tomato Sauce and Cheese

- **Avoid watery squash:** After roasting, let the squash sit cut side up for a few minutes to release steam before adding sauce. This helps prevent extra moisture.
- **Shortcut tip:** You can microwave the squash for 10–12 minutes if you're short on time – it won't be as caramelized, but it still works beautifully.
- **Make-ahead friendly:** Roast the squash and prepare the sauce a day ahead. When ready to serve, assemble, top with cheese, and rebake until hot and bubbly.

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## Variations

- **Add protein:** Mix in cooked Italian sausage, ground turkey, or chicken for a heartier version.
- **Creamy twist:** Add a few spoonfuls of ricotta cheese before re baking for a creamy, lasagna-style flavor.
- **Pesto lovers:** Drizzle with homemade basil pesto before serving for an herby burst of freshness.
- **Spicy kick:** Add a pinch of red pepper flakes to the sauce for a little heat.
- Craving more Italian-inspired comfort food?  
Check out my **Gnocchi Lasagna Soup** or **Creamy Mushroom Chicken** next!





**Baked Spaghetti Squash with Tomato Sauce**

# and Cheese

**Servings:** 4

**Cook Time:** About 1 hour

## Ingredients

- 1 medium **spaghetti squash** (about 2  $\frac{1}{2}$ –3 pounds)
- 2 tablespoons **zx** divided
- **Salt and freshly ground black pepper**, to taste
- 2 cups tomato **sauce**
- 2 cloves **garlic**, minced
- 1 teaspoon **dried oregano**
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup **fresh basil**, chopped (plus extra for garnish)
- 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups **shredded mozzarella cheese**
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup **grated parmesan cheese**

## Instructions

### 1. Preheat the oven:

Preheat your oven to **400°F (200°C)**. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

### 2. Prepare the squash:

Carefully cut the spaghetti squash in half crosswise and scoop out the seeds. Drizzle the inside with **1 tablespoon olive oil**, then season with **salt and pepper**. Place cut side down on the prepared baking sheet.

### 3. Roast:

Bake for **35–40 minutes**, or until the flesh is tender and easily pulls into strands with a fork. Remove from the oven and let cool slightly.

**4. Make the sauce:**

While the squash roasts, heat **1 tablespoon olive oil** in a medium size pan over medium heat. Add **garlic** and cook until fragrant, about **1 minute**. Stir in **tomato sauce**, **oregano**, and **basil**. Simmer for **10–15 minutes**, then season with salt and pepper to taste.

**5. Combine:**

Once the squash is cool enough to handle, use a fork to shred the flesh into spaghetti-like strands. Leave the strands in the shell halves or transfer them to a baking dish. Spoon the **tomato sauce** evenly over the squash and toss gently to combine.

**6. Add cheese and rebake:**

Top each half (or the baking dish) with **shredded mozzarella** and **grated parmesan**. Return to the oven and bake for **10–15 minutes**, until the cheese is melted and golden.

**7. Serve:**

Garnish with fresh basil and an extra drizzle of olive oil. Serve hot, right from the shell for a rustic presentation or plated for a cozy Italian-inspired meal

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# Italian Cauliflower al Forno

## Italian Cauliflower al Forno

I've always loved cauliflower – it's one of those vegetables that doesn't get nearly enough credit. Too often it's overlooked, but with a little Italian flair, it turns into something truly special. This **Cauliflower al Forno** is proof that simple ingredients can make magic. Roasted until golden, then baked in layers of rich marinara, creamy béchamel, and melted cheese, it's cozy, comforting, and completely irresistible. Whether you serve it as a side or a vegetarian main, this dish will make anyone rethink how delicious cauliflower can be.

## Things to know about this Italian Cauliflower al Forno

- **Make ahead:** You can roast the cauliflower and even assemble the dish a day in advance. Just cover and refrigerate, then bake when ready to serve.
- **Reheating:** Warm leftovers in the oven at 350°F until bubbly, or reheat individual portions in the air fryer for a crisp top.
- **Serving idea:** Pair it with a simple green salad, crusty bread, or even over a scoop of creamy polenta for a full meal.
- **Storage:** Keeps well up to 3 days in the fridge – the flavors get even better as they mingle.

## • Variations

- **Add Italian sausage:** Brown mild or spicy Italian sausage and scatter it over the roasted cauliflower before baking for extra heartiness.
- **Use other veggies:** Try mixing in roasted zucchini, bell peppers, or mushrooms for more texture and flavor.
- **Make it spicy:** Add a pinch of red pepper flakes to your Easy Marinara Sauce for a little kick.
- **Go cheesy:** Add a layer of ricotta or burrata before topping with mozzarella for an extra creamy version.
- **Lighter option:** Skip the béchamel and just use Easy Marinara Sauce – it's still delicious and a bit lighter.
- If you love this comforting Italian-style cauliflower bake, be sure to try my **Homemade Béchamel Sauce** and **Easy Marinara Sauce** – both add incredible depth and flavor to any baked pasta or veggie dish.  
Craving more cozy Italian comfort food? Check out my **Mushroom Sausage Sauce Polenta** or **Creamy Italian Sausage Risotto** next!





## **. Italian Cauliflower al Forno**

**Servings: 4-6**

**Cook Time:** 45 minutes

**Prep Time:** 15 minutes

## Ingredients

- 1 medium cauliflower, cut into florets
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp dried thyme or rosemary (optional)
- 2 cups **Easy Marinara Sauce** – use your homemade or store-bought favorite
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 cup **Homemade Béchamel Sauce**
- Fresh basil or parsley for garnish
  
- **Béchamel Sauce**
  - 2 tbsp butter
  - 2 tbsp all-purpose flour
  - $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups milk
  - Pinch of nutmeg
  - Salt and pepper, to taste

## Instructions

1. **Preheat the oven:** 400°F (200°C).

## **2. Roast the cauliflower:**

- Toss cauliflower florets with olive oil, salt, pepper, oregano, and thyme.
- Spread on a baking sheet and roast for 20 minutes until slightly golden.

## **3. Make the béchamel sauce**

- In a small saucepan, melt butter over medium heat.
- Stir in flour and cook 1–2 minutes until lightly golden.
- Gradually whisk in milk, stirring constantly until thickened.
- Season with salt, pepper, and a pinch of nutmeg.

## **4. Assemble the dish:**

- In a baking dish, spread a thin layer of tomato sauce.
- Arrange roasted cauliflower on top.
- Drizzle with béchamel sauce
- Pour remaining tomato sauce over the cauliflower.
- Sprinkle mozzarella and Parmesan evenly on top.

**5. Bake:** 20–25 minutes until bubbly and golden on top.

**6. Garnish and serve:** Sprinkle with fresh basil or parsley before serving.

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# Italian Roasted Delicata Squash for Salads

## Italian Roasted Delicata Squash for Salads

Fall flavors don't get much better than this: golden roasted delicata squash paired with peppery arugula, crunchy pumpkin seeds, and nutty shaved Parmesan. Tossed in a creamy Sicilian-inspired dressing, this salad is simple, rustic, and full of cozy Italian charm. Best of all? You don't need to peel the squash – the tender skin adds color, texture, and flavor that makes every bite irresistible. Whether you're serving it as a side or a light meal, it's the perfect way to celebrate seasonal produce with a touch of Italian flair.

## Things to know about this Italian Roasted Delicata Squash for Salads

- **No Peeling Needed:** The skin of delicata squash is thin and tender when roasted, so it's completely edible and adds lovely texture.
- **Roasting Brings Out Natural Sweetness:** Roasting caramelizes the edges of the squash, enhancing its nutty, sweet flavor – perfect for balancing the peppery arugula and savory Parmesan.
- **Flexible Salad Base:** This roasted squash works beautifully in salads, grain bowls, or even as a side dish for Italian mains like chicken or sausage.
- **Pumpkin Seeds Add Crunch:** Toasted pumpkin seeds

(pepitas) provide a satisfying crunch and a subtle nutty flavor that complements the roasted squash.

- **Creamy Sicilian Dressing:** The dressing is tangy, garlicky, and creamy – it ties the salad together while keeping it light and fresh.
- **Make Ahead:** You can roast the squash a day ahead – just toss it with the dressing right before serving so the arugula stays crisp.
- **Seasonal & Healthy:** This salad is packed with seasonal fall flavors, making it a nutritious, colorful, and Italian-inspired dish for any table.
- Try this roasted delicata squash salad today and bring a touch of Italian autumn to your table! For more cozy Italian-inspired fall recipes, check out my [Roasted Butternut Squash lasagna](#) or [creamy roasted butternut squash soup](#).



# Italian Roasted Delicata Squash Salad with Creamy Sicilian Dressing

**Servings:** 2–4

**Cook Time:** 25–30 minutes

## Ingredients for Roasting the Delicata Squash:

- 1 delicata squash, scrubbed and sliced into  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch half-moons (skin on)
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon sea salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon garlic powder (optional)
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme or sage, chopped (optional)

## Salad Ingredients:

- 4 cups arugula
- 2 tablespoons toasted pumpkin seeds (pepitas)
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup shaved Parmesan

## • Creamy Sicilian Dressing Ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise or Greek yogurt
- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup red wine vinegar
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup lemon juice

- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 teaspoon oregano
- Salt and pepper to taste

## Instructions

### 1. Preheat the Oven:

Preheat your oven to 425°F (220°C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

### 2. Roast the Squash:

Toss the sliced delicata squash with olive oil, salt, pepper, garlic powder, and herbs. Spread in a single layer on the baking sheet. Roast for 20–25 minutes, flipping halfway through, until tender and golden at the edges.

### 3. Make the Dressing:

In a small bowl, whisk together mayonnaise (or Greek yogurt), olive oil, red wine vinegar, lemon juice, minced garlic, oregano, salt, and pepper until smooth and creamy.

### 4. Assemble the Salad:

In a large bowl, place the arugula and roasted delicata squash. Drizzle with the creamy Sicilian dressing and toss gently. Sprinkle with toasted pumpkin seeds and shaved Parmesan.

### 5. Serve:

Serve immediately as a warm salad or let the squash cool slightly for a room-temperature version. Perfect as a side dish or a light Italian-inspired meal.

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# Roasted Butternut Squash Soup

## Roasted Butternut Squash Soup

There's nothing quite like a warm bowl of roasted butternut squash soup on a chilly day. This version roasts everything together – butternut squash, onions, garlic, sweet peppers, and carrots – for deep, caramelized flavor. Once roasted, everything is blended into a silky, naturally creamy soup that's comforting, wholesome, and full of fall goodness. It's a simple, rustic dish that tastes like something you'd get at a cozy café, yet it's easy to make right at home.

## Things to know about this Roasted Butternut Squash Soup

- **Roasting Builds Flavor:** Roasting the squash, onion, garlic, peppers, and carrots together gives this soup a naturally sweet, caramelized depth you can't get from boiling.
- **Easy to Blend:** Once roasted, everything purees beautifully for a smooth, creamy texture – no need for added cream unless you want extra richness.
- **Customizable Broth:** Use vegetable broth for a vegetarian version or chicken broth for a heartier flavor.
- **Freezer-Friendly:** This soup freezes well for up to 3 months. Reheat gently on the stove and refresh with a splash of broth.

- **Perfect Make-Ahead Meal:** Roast the vegetables a day in advance, then blend and warm when ready to serve for a quick, cozy meal.
  - **Italian Flavor Twist:** Add a drizzle of olive oil infused with rosemary, a sprinkle of Parmesan cheese, or a touch of crushed red pepper for that warm Italian flair.

If you love this cozy soup, you might also enjoy:

- Italian wedding soup
- Italian Escarole and Beans with Sausage
- Zuppa Toscana with Italian Sausage
- Vegetarian Mushroom Soup with an Italian Twist



# Roasted Butternut Squash Soup

**Servings:** 4–6

**Cook Time:** 1 hour (15 min prep, 45 min roast)

## Ingredients

- 1 large butternut squash, halved and seeds removed
- 1 medium onion, roughly chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, unpeeled
- 1–2 small sweet peppers (or bell pepper), chopped
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and chopped
- 2–3 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- 4 cups vegetable or chicken broth (as preferred)
- Optional:  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon smoked paprika or pinch of chili flakes for depth
- Optional toppings: a drizzle of cream, toasted pumpkin seeds, or crispy sage

## Instructions

1. **Preheat oven:** to 400°F (200°C).
2. **Prepare vegetables:** Place the cleaned, halved butternut squash on a baking sheet, cut side up. Fill each cavity with chopped onion, garlic cloves (still in skin), and peppers. Scatter the carrots around the pan.
3. **Season and roast:** Drizzle everything with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Roast for about 45–50

minutes, or until the squash is tender and caramelized.

4. **Scoop and blend:** Once cooled slightly, scoop the flesh from the squash and squeeze out the roasted garlic. Add all roasted vegetables to a blender with 3 cups of broth. Blend until smooth, adding more broth to reach your desired consistency.
5. **Simmer:** Pour the soup into a pot and warm over medium heat for 5–10 minutes. Adjust seasoning as needed.
6. **Serve:** Ladle into bowls and top with a drizzle of cream or olive oil and your favorite garnishes.

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## Butternut Squash Gnocchi with Gorgonzola

## Butternut Squash Gnocchi with Gorgonzola”

Fall is in the air, and nothing says cozy quite like roasted butternut squash gnocchi. This recipe combines the sweetness of roasted butternut squash with delicate soft gnocchi, perfect for pairing with creamy gorgonzola sauce.

It's no wonder most Italian restaurants have gnocchi on the menu. Most home cooks are intimidated by making gnocchi at home.

I am here to tell you you don't have to be.

Making homemade gnocchi is a lot easier than you think. The most challenging part is getting the dough to the right consistency to produce the soft light gnocchi dumplings. This make take a few attempts, and that's okay. After a few tries you will be making gnocchi like a pro.

Whether you're new to making gnocchi or a seasoned pro , this easy to follow recipe is bound to become a favorite.

## Things to know about this Butternut Squash Gnocchi with Gorgonzola"

1. Butternut squash is a seasonal fall vegetable, bringing a natural sweetness to the gnocchi that pairs well with many sauces.
2. These gnocchi are easy to make. This recipe simplifies the process. making it a beginner friendly gnocchi recipe
3. The recipe is versatile pair the gnocchi with a browned butter and sage, marinara or a creamy pancetta gorgonzola sauce like I did. If you would like the recipe for the sauce I used let me know, if I should write a blog post.
4. This recipe is perfect for meal prep. These gnocchi are freezer friendly, so you can a batch in advance to enjoy anytime, or make a double batch one for now and one for later.
5. As always , please let met know if you make this easy roasted butternut squash gnocchi recipe. I love hearing from you. And it helps others. THANKS!!!
6. **Warm up this fall with these cozy Italian dishes:**

• **Creamy Mushroom and Italian Sausage Risotto** –

rich, earthy, and perfect for chilly evenings.

- **Italian-Style Cabbage Rolls** – hearty, satisfying, and full of fall flavors.

**Don't forget to save this Butternut Squash Gnocchi recipe—it's the ultimate cozy fall dinner!**

## **Butternut Squash Gnocchi with Gorgonzola**

**Servings:** 4

**Prep Time:** 30 minutes

**Cook Time:** 25 minutes

## **Ingredients: For the Gnocchi**

- 2–3 cups roasted and mashed butternut squash (about 1 medium squash)
- 1 to 1½ cups all-purpose flour (start with 1 cup and add more as needed)
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup parmesan cheese
- salt and pepper to taste
- A pinch of Nutmeg
- **For the Gorgonzola Cream Sauce:**
  - 1 cup heavy cream
  - 4 oz Gorgonzola cheese, crumbled
  - 2 tbsp unsalted butter
  - 2–3 oz pancetta, diced
  - 1 small shallot, finely minced (optional)
  - Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to

taste

- Pinch of nutmeg
- Chopped parsley

## Instructions

1. Start by peeling and cleaning out the squash. Then cut into equal pieces. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper lay the butternut squash on top drizzle with olive oil salt and pepper to taste. Roast in a preheated 375-degree oven until fork tender about 20 minutes. Mash the squash into a smooth puree. Refrigerate until chilled
2. Put the flour on a broad. Make a well in the center add the rest of the ingredients , the squash, egg and parmesan cheese including salt and pepper.
3. Begin incorporating the flour into the wet ingredients kneading the dough until smooth, adding more flour a little at a time , until you have a smooth dough the dough will be slightly sticking. Let the dough rest covered for 30 minutes.
4. Then section the dough into 8 equal pieces. Roll into 12 inch long ropes flour lightly, cut the ropes into 1/2 inch pieces flour lightly. Using a fork and your thumb roll the gnocchi pieces into the classic shape. I have included a video showing the technic.
5. **Roast the Squash:**  
Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Cut the squash in half, remove seeds, and roast cut-side down until tender (about 30–35 minutes). Scoop out the flesh and mash it, letting excess moisture evaporate.

## **2. Make the Gnocchi Dough:**

In a bowl, combine the mashed squash, egg, salt, and nutmeg. Gradually add 1 cup of flour, mixing gently until a soft dough forms. Add more flour as needed—dough should be slightly sticky but workable.

## **3. Shape the Gnocchi:**

Divide dough into portions. Roll each into a rope about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch thick, then cut into 1-inch pieces. Optional: roll each piece over a fork for the classic gnocchi ridges.

## **4. Cook the Gnocchi:**

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook gnocchi in batches until they float (about 2–3 minutes). Remove with a slotted spoon and set aside.

## **5. Make the Gorgonzola Cream Sauce:**

In a skillet, melt the butter over medium heat cook diced pancetta until crisp. Remove and set aside. Sauté shallots until soft and translucent lower the heat, stir in cream until warm but not boiling. Add Gorgonzola in small pieces, stirring until smooth. Season with salt, pepper, and a pinch of nutmeg. Stir the crispy pancetta back into the sauce.

## **6. Combine and Serve:**

Toss the cooked gnocchi gently in the sauce until coated. Serve immediately, garnished with Freshly chopped Italian parsley

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# Storage Instructions

## Uncooked Gnocchi:

- Place gnocchi on a floured baking sheet in a single layer. Freeze for 1–2 hours, then transfer to a freezer-safe bag or container.
- Cook from frozen in boiling salted water; they will float when done.

## Cooked Gnocchi with Sauce:

- Store leftover gnocchi and sauce separately in airtight containers in the fridge for up to 3 days.
- Reheat gently in a skillet over low heat, adding a splash of cream or milk if needed to loosen the sauce.

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# Italian Green Beans and Potato Salad

# Italian Green Beans and Potato Salad

There's something about the combination of fresh green beans and tender potatoes that always takes me back to family

gatherings and summer cookouts. This Italian-style salad is a dish I grew up eating, especially when green beans were plentiful in the garden and new potatoes were just dug up. Unlike creamy American-style potato salad, this version is light, bright, and dressed simply with olive oil, vinegar, garlic, and herbs. It's rustic, refreshing, and full of flavor – the kind of dish that tastes even better after it sits for a little while and the flavors have had a chance to mingle.

What I love most about this salad is its versatility. It's not just for summer picnics – it's perfect anytime of the year. In warmer months, it shines as a light side dish for grilled meats or seafood, while in cooler months, it pairs beautifully with roasted chicken, baked fish, or even a cozy Sunday roast.

## **Things to know about this Italian Green Beans and Potato Salad**

This salad tastes even better after a few hours in the fridge. The potatoes soak up the garlicky vinaigrette, and the green beans keep their crunch. Since it's made without mayo, it's perfect for picnics and potlucks, and it's just as welcome in the middle of summer as it is on a chilly autumn or winter day.

### **Variations to Try:**

- Add a handful of kalamata or green olives for a briny bite.
- Make it heartier with canned tuna or sliced hard-boiled eggs.
- Swap the parsley for fresh basil or mint.
- Use fresh lemon juice instead of vinegar for a brighter flavor.

**Love this recipe?** Be sure to check out my other Italian-inspired sides like **Italian crispy roasted potatoes** or Fuyu Persimmon Walnut Salad.

## **Recipe: Italian Green Beans and Potato Salad**

**Servings:** 6

**Cook Time:** 25 minutes

### **Ingredients**

- 1 pound baby potatoes (red or Yukon gold), halved or quartered
- 1 pound fresh green beans, trimmed
- 1 small red onion, thinly sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/3 tablespoons red wine vinegar (or white wine vinegar)
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard (optional, for extra tang)
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes ( adjust to taste )
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

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### **Instructions**

1. **Cook the potatoes:** Place the potatoes in a large pot of

salted water. Bring to a boil and cook until just fork-tender, about 12–15 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, remove the potatoes and set aside, keeping the cooking water in the pot.

2. **Cook the green beans:** In the same pot of boiling water, add the trimmed green beans and cook for 3–4 minutes, until bright green and tender-crisp. Drain and plunge into a bowl of ice water to stop the cooking. Drain again.
  3. **Make the dressing:** In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, vinegar, garlic, mustard (if using), oregano, salt, and pepper.
  4. **Assemble the salad:** In a large serving bowl, combine the potatoes, green beans, and sliced red onion. Pour the dressing over the top and toss gently to coat.
  5. **Finish & serve:** Sprinkle with chopped parsley and adjust seasoning with more salt, pepper, or vinegar to taste. Serve warm, at room temperature, or chilled.
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## **Italian Spiced Lentil Soup**

# Title with Recipe Name in it

There's nothing quite like a bowl of lentil soup to warm you from the inside out. This Italian spiced lentil soup takes the comforting rustic style of Italian cooking and layers it with warm, fragrant spices. The result is a simple yet deeply flavorful soup that feels both familiar and a little unexpected.

Instead of the usual tomato and vegetable base, this recipe leans on cumin, coriander, ginger, chili powder, and a hint of cinnamon to give the lentils a cozy depth of flavor. Olive oil, fresh greens, and a drizzle of finishing oil keep it rooted in Italian tradition. It's the kind of soup that makes your kitchen smell amazing while it simmers and tastes even better with a slice of crusty bread or focaccia on the side.

## Things to know about this Italian spiced lentil soup

- **Yellow lentils cook faster** than green or brown lentils and create a naturally creamy consistency—almost like a light purée.
- **Storage tip:** This soup thickens as it sits. Add a splash of broth or water when reheating to bring it back to the perfect texture.
- **Spice balance:** The cinnamon adds warmth without making it sweet—it balances beautifully with the cumin and chili powder.
- **Finishing touch:** For an extra burst of flavor, drizzle the soup with your topping made from **olive oil, chili powder, and fresh parsley**. It adds color, heat, and freshness all in one spoonful.

- If you love cozy bowls like this **Italian Spiced Lentil Soup**, you'll also enjoy:
  - Creamy Italian Bean and Parmesan Soup
  - Split Pea Soup with Ham
  - Classic Italian Wedding Soup

# Italian Spiced Lentil Soup

## Servings & Time

- **Servings:** 4
- **Prep Time:** 10 minutes
- **Cook Time:** 20 minutes
- **Total Time:** 30 minutes

## Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon ground cinnamon

- 2 cups dried red, yellow or brown lentils, rinsed
- 6 cups vegetable or chicken broth
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 teaspoon salt (or to taste)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cups chopped spinach or escarole (optional)
- Fresh parsley, chopped (for garnish)
- Drizzle of olive oil mixed with freshly chopped parsley for finishing

## Instructions

1. Heat olive oil in a large pot or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add onion and salt cook until soft and golden, about 5 minutes.
2. Stir in garlic, cumin, coriander, ginger, chili powder, and cinnamon. Cook for 1–2 minutes until fragrant.
3. Add lentils, broth, bay leaves, salt, and pepper. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer uncovered until lentils are tender, about 25-30 minutes.
4. Remove bay leaves. for a smoother consistency use a whisk to mix for a few minutes. Stir in spinach or escarole (if using) and cook for 2–3 minutes until wilted.
5. Adjust seasoning as needed.
6. Serve hot, garnished with the olive oil mix

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# Butternut Squash Lasagna

## Butternut Squash Lasagna

Fall has always been my favorite time of year. There's just something about the crisp air, the changing leaves, and the way the kitchen feels cozier when something warm is baking in the oven. I especially love cooking with fall produce, and butternut squash is always at the top of my list. It's naturally sweet, roasts up beautifully, and makes the creamiest base for so many comforting dishes. This butternut squash lasagna is one of my favorites—it's layered with roasted squash, creamy ricotta, and plenty of cheese for the ultimate cozy dinner. It's the kind of meal that's perfect for a Sunday dinner with family or sharing around the table with friends

## Things to know about this butternut squash lasagna

- **Make-Ahead Friendly:** You can assemble the lasagna a day ahead, cover it tightly with foil, and refrigerate until ready to bake. Just add 10–15 extra minutes to the baking time.
- **Freezer Option:** This lasagna freezes beautifully! Bake it, let it cool completely, then wrap well and freeze for up to 3 months. Reheat covered at 350°F until warmed through.
- **Cheese Swaps:** Ricotta is classic, but you can use

cottage cheese for extra protein, or add fontina or Gruyère for a richer flavor.

- **Shortcuts:** Save time by buying pre-cut butternut squash or even frozen squash. No-boil lasagna noodles also make this recipe easier.
- **Add a Protein:** If you'd like, layer in Italian sausage, pancetta, or shredded chicken for a heartier version.
- And if you want to take this lasagna to the next level, try it with my **Easy Béchamel Sauce** recipe. It's quick to make and adds that extra creamy layer that makes this dish irresistible.
- **Serving Tip:** This lasagna pairs beautifully with a simple green salad and crusty bread for a complete fall dinner.

## • More Cozy Recipes to Try

If you love this Butternut Squash Lasagna, here are a few more comforting recipes you might enjoy:

- Classic Italian Wedding Soup – another hearty fall favorite.
- Creamy Butternut Squash Pasta with Gorgonzola – a quick 20-minute dinner with the same fall flavors.
- ☐ Italian Roasted Sausage, Potatoes, and Peppers – a cozy sheet pan dinner that's always a hit.
- ☐ Escarole and Beans with Italian Sausage – rustic, simple, and perfect with crusty bread.

# Butternut Squash Lasagna

## Servings & Time

- **Servings:** 8
  - **Prep Time:** 30 minutes
  - **Cook Time:** 50 minutes
  - **Total Time:** 1 hour 20 minutes
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## Ingredients

- 1 medium butternut squash (about 2  $\frac{1}{2}$ –3 lbs. ), peeled, seeded, and cubed
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp fresh thyme (or  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp dried)
- 1 tsp fresh sage, chopped (or  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp dried)
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- 2 cups ricotta cheese
- 1 large egg
- 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 cups béchamel (homemade or store-bought)
- 9 lasagna noodles (no-boil or cooked)

- Optional:  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp red pepper flakes for heat, crispy sage leaves for garnish
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## Instructions

### 1. Roast the Squash:

- Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).
- Toss squash cubes with olive oil, garlic, thyme, sage, salt, and pepper.
- Spread on a baking sheet and roast for 25–30 minutes, until soft and caramelized.
- Mash lightly with a fork (leave a few chunks for texture).

### 2. Prepare the Cheese Mixture:

- In a bowl, mix ricotta, egg,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup mozzarella,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup Parmesan, salt, and pepper.

### 3. Assemble the Lasagna:

- Spread a thin layer of béchamel on the bottom of a 9×13-inch baking dish.
- Add noodles, a layer of mashed squash, dollops of ricotta mixture, a drizzle of béchamel, and a sprinkle of mozzarella.
- Repeat layers (about 3 total), finishing with noodles topped with béchamel, mozzarella, and remaining Parmesan.

### 4. Bake:

- Cover with foil and bake at 375°F (190°C) for 25 minutes.
- Remove foil and bake another 15–20 minutes until golden and bubbling.
- Let rest for 10 minutes before slicing.

#### 5. Serve:

- Garnish with crispy sage leaves or extra Parmesan.

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## **Creamy Butternut Squash Risotto with Arborio**

## **Creamy Butternut Squash Risotto with Arborio”**

It's no surprise most Italian restaurants have risotto on their menu, it seems too complicated for the home cook. Am here to tell you it's not complicated at all. This creamy butternut squash risotto with arborio was a restaurant menu favorite, it's easy to make, uses few ingredients and it's delicious.

Risotto is a classic Northern Italian rice dish slowly cooked in broth until it becomes rich and creamy. The broth can be made from meat, fish, or vegetables—I used chicken broth, but if you're vegetarian, vegetable stock works just as well.

# Things to know about this Creamy Butternut Squash Risotto with Arborio”

- The best rice for risotto is a short-grain Italian rice. Arborio is the most common. Their higher starch content is what gives risotto its creamy consistency.
- Toasting the rice in olive oil and butter before adding broth adds a nutty flavor and slight crunch. This simple step builds a flavorful base for the dish.
- Always use hot broth, adding it gradually a ladle at a time. Stirring as it absorbs releases the starches that make the risotto silky and rich.
- Roasting the butternut squash intensifies its natural sweetness and creates caramelized edges. It’s so good you’ll have to resist eating it all straight from the pan before it makes it into the risotto!
- “If you enjoyed this butternut squash risotto, don’t miss my Creamy Italian Sausage Risotto or my homemade restaurant mushroom Risotto for more rich, comforting flavors!

## Creamy Butternut Squash Risotto with Arborio

- **Serving Size:** 4
- **Cook Time:** 35–40 minutes (about 10 minutes prep + 20–25 minutes cooking)

# Ingredients

- 2 cups Italian short grain rice
- 1 small butternut squash, peeled seeded and cubed
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil + 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 cup minced shallots
- 1 Tablespoons minced garlic
- 2 cups chopped spinach
- 4 cups chicken stock
- 1 cup white wine
- 1 cup crumbled gorgonzola cheese
- 1 cup grated parmesan
- 2 tablespoons chopped Italian parsley
- 1/2 cup pine nuts
- salt and pepper to taste

- **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Peel and cut butternut squash into cubes drizzle with olive oil, salt and pepper roast in a 375 degree oven for 30 minutes
2. Mean while heat chicken stock keep warm, in a deep saute pan heat the butter and olive oil, add onion and garlic, saute until translucent,
3. Add the rice cook until golden, salt and pepper to taste, add hot chicken stock slowly and a little at a time waiting until the stock is absorbed before adding more while stirring continuously, Continue adding the broth until all is used
4. Cook until risotto is firm to the bite cooked about 20 minutes. Add parmesan cheese, roasted butternut squash,
5. Add the gorgonzola and more broth if the sauce is to thick. Top with Italian parsley, more gorgonzola and toasted pine nuts...ENJOY!!

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# Italian Crispy roasted Potatoes

# Italian Crispy roasted Potatoes

These **Italian crispy roasted potatoes** are straight from my mother's kitchen. She'd parboil them, toss with olive oil, garlic, rosemary, and a little lemon, then roast until golden and crunchy. Simple, comforting, and always the first thing to disappear at the table – I still make them just the way she did. To this day, whenever I make them, the smell that fills my kitchen instantly takes me back to her cooking, and I can't help but smile. This recipe is her original method, and it's one I know you'll want to keep on repeat in your own home.

## Things to Know About Italian Crispy Roasted Potatoes

- **Parboiling is key:** Cooking the potatoes halfway before roasting helps give them a fluffy inside and that golden, crisp crust.
- **Rough edges = more crunch:** Shaking the potatoes after draining creates little ridges that crisp up beautifully in the oven.
- **Use the right potato:** Yukon Golds give a buttery texture, while Russets crisp up with an extra crunch – both work well.

- **Fresh rosemary makes a difference:** If you can, use fresh rosemary sprigs. They infuse the oil and potatoes with authentic Italian flavor.
- **Don't skip the lemon:** A little zest before roasting and a squeeze of juice at the end adds brightness and balances the richness.
- **Crowding the pan ruins the crisp:** Spread potatoes in a single layer so they roast instead of steam.
- **Reheating tip:** Pop leftovers back in a hot oven for 10 minutes to bring back their crispness – the microwave won't do them justice.
- Serve these potatoes alongside a hearty main! Try my Bone-In Pork Chop Piccata or Stuffed Chicken Breast for a full Italian dinner that everyone will love.

## Italian Crispy roasted Potatoes

- **Servings:** 4
- **Prep Time:** 15 minutes
- **Cook Time:** 45 minutes
- **Total Time:** 1 hour

### Ingredients

- 2 lbs. Yukon Gold or Russet potatoes, peeled and cut into wedges
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 2 minced garlic cloves,
- 2 sprigs fresh rosemary (or 1 tsp dried)

- Zest of 1 lemon
- Juice of 1 lemon
- salt and pepper to taste

# Instructions

## 1. Instructions

### 1. Parboil the potatoes:

- Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil.
- Add potato wedges and cook for 5-7 minutes, until just fork-tender but not falling apart.
- Drain well and let steam dry for 2 minutes.

### 2. Rough up the edges:

- Shake the colander gently to create a slightly rough surface on the potatoes. This helps them crisp in the oven.

### 3. Season the potatoes:

- Preheat oven to 425°F (220°C).
- In a large bowl, toss the potatoes with olive oil, minced garlic, rosemary, lemon zest, salt, and pepper until evenly coated.

### 4. Roast:

- Spread the potatoes in a single layer on a parchment-lined baking sheet.
- Roast for 35–45 minutes, flipping halfway,

until deeply golden and crisp.

#### **5. Finish with lemon:**

- Remove garlic cloves and rosemary sprigs.
- Squeeze fresh lemon juice over the potatoes just before serving.

### **Serving Suggestion**

Serve hot as a side with roast chicken, grilled fish, or alongside a big Italian salad.