

Roasted Butternut squash orzo

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This creamy roasted butternut squash orzo is healthy and delicious. The rich, nutty sauce gets warm fall flavors by roasting the butternut squash with sage and garlic. Roasting the squash brings out its natural sweetness and adds another depth of flavor. And when you mix it with stock, cream and parmesan cheese, it becomes an irresistible rich and savory sauce . This simple recipe is not only delicious it is also affordable!!! Just a handful of ingredients you probably already have on hand.

Roasted butternut squash orzo Variations

Protein: This is a vegetarian recipe if you want to add protein you can saute some Italian sausage spicy or mild along with the garlic. If you want a healthier protein try chicken apple or turkey sage sausage.

Vegetables: you can replace the spinach with Swiss chard or kale and add other vegetables like diced zucchini or mushrooms.

Gluten free: I am using orzo a small shaped rice looking pasta. You can use any shape pasta you like or gluten free.

I recommend roasting the butternut squash in advance. This will reduce your actual cooking time. You could prepare the whole sauce recipe the day before. Than bring it to the stove top and add the orzo when your ready to serve. You can keep the cooked pasta sauce in your fridge for up to 4 days.

Ingredients

- 4 cups peeled and cubed butternut squash
- 4 garlic cloves
- 4 to 5 sage leaves
- 4 Tbsp/ olive oil
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2 cups vegetable or chicken stock
- 3 cups orzo
- 3 cups chopped spinach
- 1 cup grated parmesan
- 1 cup gorgonzola

Instructions

1. Preheat your oven to 375- degrees. Start by peeling and cutting the butternut squash into medium size dice. Place the squash on a cookie sheet, add the garlic and sage leaves, salt and pepper to taste, drizzle with the olive oil and roast for 15 to 20 minutes or until soft.
2. Then add the squash to a pan over medium high heat on the stove top. Add the cream , stock and orzo. Simmer until the orzo is cooked el dent about 10 minutes. Add the spinach and grated parmesan cheese and simmer just a few minutes until the spinach is wilted.
3. Plate top with the gorgonzola and Italian parsley .
ENJOY!!!

Homemade Restaurant Mushroom

Risotto

Homemade Restaurant Mushroom risotto

It's no surprise most Italian restaurants have risotto on their menu, it seems too complicated for the home cook.

Well Am here to tell you this Homemade Restaurant Mushroom risotto isn't complicated at all.

Risotto is a northern Italian rice dish cooked with broth until it reaches a creamy consistency.

The broth can be derived from meat, fish or vegetables, I used chicken broth, if you are vegetarian you can use vegetable stock.

This is one of those recipes you make a enough of, for next day reheats or freeze for a quick ready made meal.

Plus, risotto is easy and versatile enough to have on your family weeknight meal plan. This restaurant quality recipe is also perfect for Holiday dinner with friends, to show off what a great home chef you are.

Serve it up in some pretty restaurant style white plates, cloth napkins and your favorite drink and you just make yourself a restaurant style meal without leaving home.

Tips for Success when making homemade restaurant mushroom

risotto

For this Homemade restaurant mushroom risotto the best rice to use is a short grain Italian rice the most common is arborio rice. It's important to use a short grain rice, it has a higher starch content to produce the creamiest risotto.

Another tip for success when making any risotto recipe is toasting the rice in the olive oil and butter before adding the liquid, it adds a bit of crunch.

And lastly the broth should be hot when adding it to the rice while stirring, only add small amounts of stock, stirring until it's absorbed before adding more.

If you make this recipe be sure to leave me a comment, and please don't forget to tag me on Instagram.

Ingredients

- 2 cups Italian short grain rice
- 2 cups sliced mushrooms
- 1 Tablespoon olive oil and 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 chopped onion
- 2 Tablespoons chopped garlic
- 2 cups chopped spinach (optional)
- 4 cups chicken stock or vegetable stock
- 1 cup white wine
- 1 cup grated parmesan
- 2 tablespoons chopped Italian parsley
- salt and pepper to taste

• Instructions

1. Heat chicken or vegetable stock keep warm with the white wine
2. In a deep saute pan heat the butter and olive oil to

medium heat. Add onion and garlic, saute until tender and just beginning to brown

3. Add the mushrooms saute until golden
 4. Add rice cook rice until golden, salt and pepper to taste,
 5. Add hot stock slowly a little at a time waiting until the stock is absorbed before adding more while stirring continuously.
 6. Cook until risotto is firm to the bite about 20 minutes. Add parmesan cheese, and chopped spinach if using the last five minutes . Sprinkle with more Italian parsley and grated parmesan. ENJOY!!!
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Oven baked Tomatoes oreganata

Oven baked tomatoes Oreganata

This easy and delicious oven baked tomato oreganata recipe is the perfect way to use up all the rest of those summer tomatoes.

I grew up on a farm in the Tuscan country side, We always had an abundance of summer vegetables, especially beautiful tomatoes of every shape and flavor. My mother severed them in so many different ways, before canning the rest. This baked tomato oreganata was and still is one of my favorite ways to enjoy this summer staple.

Tips about this oven baked Tomato

oreganata recipe

Use ripe but firm tomatoes, like roma or plum tomatoes when you make this oven baked tomato oreganata recipe. They hold their shape better and have less water.

To prepare the the breadcrumbs use fresh breadcrumbs for the best texture. Mix them with the garlic, onion, oregano(fresh if possible) If you don't have excess to fresh oregano, (I have attached a link for a good quality dry oregano) the grated parmesan cheese and a bit of olive oil. This mixture should be crumbly and slightly moist, so it sticks to the tomatoes.

Pre baking the tomatoes eliminates some of the water from the tomatoes for a dryer tomato .

Bake at a moderate heat 375 so the tomatoes soften and the breadcrumbs turn a golden brown and crispy. If you want extra crispness, broil the tomatoes the last few minutes.

Ingredients

- 5 Lbs. Roma tomatoes
- 4 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 cup breadcrumbs
- 1 cup grated parmesan
- 2 Tbsp. dry or fresh oregano
- 1 Tbsp. chopped Italian parsley
- 1 Tbsp. garlic powder
- 1 Tbsp. onion powder

Instructions

1. Start by washing the tomatoes and drying . Cut the tomatoes in half length wise. Sprinkle the tomatoes with the half of oregano. Salt and pepper to taste and

drizzle with half the olive oil. Then roast in a preheated 375-degree oven for 15 minutes.

2. Mean while in a bowl mix the breadcrumbs, grated parmesan parsley, garlic, and onion powder
 3. Top the pre roasted tomatoes with the breadcrumb mixture. And re bake for an additional 20 to 30 minutes. top with Italian parsley. ENJOY!!!
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Spicy roasted garlic cheese bread

Spicy roasted garlic cheese bread

We can all agree that it doesn't get better than butter, garlic and bread. Wait it does get better if you roast the garlic and add hot sauce you take this Roasted Garlic cheesy garlic bread to a higher level.

This recipe takes the classic garlic bread you know and love topping it with an irresistible blend of cheeses, roasted garlic, hot sauce and a hint of fresh herbs, resulting in a mouth watering creation that's crispy on the outside and soft on the inside. It's a perfect accompaniment to pasta nights, soups, salads or any meal that can use the added flavor of garlic.

Things to know about this roasted garlic cheese bread

Roasting the garlic mellows the flavor, you can do this up to 2 days ahead of time. Mash it first it's easier when the garlic is still warm from roasting. Use a crusty bread like ciabatta, or sour dough for the best texture. Slice the bread lengthwise and toast before adding the garlic butter and cheese and re baking. This extra step ensures a crispy crust.

You can adjust the spiciness to your taste. Red pepper flakes or even finely chopped chilis can add heat. After spreading the pre toasted bread with the garlic butter and topping with the cheese , bake the bread again in a preheated 375-degree oven for 15 minutes. For an extra crispy top broil for a few minutes. Serve it hot with a side of marinara for dipping.

You are going to love this spicy roasted garlic cheese bread recipe. Not only is it delicious, it's easy to make and can be made ahead of time and frozen already assembled and then defrosted and baked for the second time when you are ready to serve.

Ingredients

- 1 loaf medium size Italian bread
- 12 to 15 gloves of fresh peeled garlic
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- a few springs of fresh oregano, thyme and rosemary
- 2 sticks of butter
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 2 cups freshly grated mozzarella
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh basil

Instructions

1. Start by adding the garlic, olive oil, fresh herbs to an oven proof ramekin roast in a preheated 375-degree oven for 15 to 20 minutes over until the garlic is golden brown and soft
 2. Slice the bread in half and toast along with the garlic for 10 minutes before adding the garlic butter.
 3. Meanwhile add the room soften butter to a bowl add the parmesan, mozzarella and Italian parsley. Salt and pepper the butter mixture according to taste.
 4. removed the herbs from the roasted garlic and mash using a fork. Add the garlic to the butter mixture and mix until well combined.
 5. Slice your Italian bread in half spread the roasted garlic butter on bot sides on the bread. top with the shredded mozzarella and more grated parmesan and bake in a 375- degree oven until the cheese is melted and beginning to brown top with freshly chopped Italian parsley. ENJOY!!!
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Pasta All 'ortolana vegetable pasta sauce

Pasta all Ortolana vegetable pasta sauce

Pasta all Ortolana is an Italian vegetarian pasta dish made with a seasonal summer vegetable sauce that combines garden

vegetables, aromatic herbs and tomato sauce to create a comfort sauce packed with flavor. It is easy to prepare and perfect when summer vegetables are in season. The vegetable sauce is stewed slowly with a medley of vegetables that result in a fragrant and delicious pasta sauce.

Things to know about this Italian vegetable pasta sauce

The Italian word Ortolana means grower of fruits and vegetables. Staying true to its meaning this vegetable pasta sauce uses a variety of fresh seasonal vegetables.

This recipe is very customizable, just like my ever changing minestrone soup the vegetables I use are what I have on hand. You can mix and match vegetables that fit your lifestyle or have on hand. But this vegetarian pasta sauce always starts like this, with a soffritto made with small diced onions, garlic, celery, and carrots. This is an important first step to add flavor and depth of flavor to the dish. Then the rest of the vegetables are added and simmered slowly in a tomato - based sauce. The results are a rich flavorful vegetarian pasta sauce. The sauce can be made ahead of time and used when you are ready to serve, It also freezer friendly. Here is the link for the freezer friendly containers I use.

Ingredients

- 1/2 lb. rigatoni
- 4 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 Tbsp. minced garlic
- 1 small chopped onion
- 1 cup diced peeled carrots
- 1 cup diced celery
- 3 cups cherry tomatoes
- 2 cups tomato sauce

- 1 diced medium zucchini
- 1 small diced eggplant
- 1 diced red bell pepper
- grated pecorino cheese
- fresh basil

Instructions

1. Start by cutting all your vegetables. Then in a large saute pan add the olive oil bring to medium high heat add the onion and garlic saute until soft and just beginning to brown.
2. Add the cherry tomatoes and saute until beginning to blister. now add the rest of the vegetables, salt and saute until the vegetables are well combined. then add the tomato sauce rinse out the cans and add one cup of water. Cover and simmer while cooking the pasta in salted water until el dente. Toss the pasta in this delicious vegetarian pasta sauce. Add fresh basil top with grated pecorino. ENJOY!!!

**Classic Italian eggplant
Parmesan**

**Classic Italian Eggplant
parmesan**

Eggplant parmesan, know as “parmigiana di melanzane” is a classic Italian dish made with layers of fried eggplant then

baked with marinara sauce and cheese.

The dish is assembled similarly to lasagna, with alternating layers of eggplant, tomato sauce, mozzarella, and parmesan cheese. The final layer is usually topped with extra cheese which melts and forms a golden bubbly crust in the oven.

When making classic Italian Eggplant parmesan, here are some tips

1. Choose the right eggplant opt for firm, medium – sized eggplants with shiny skin and no soft spots. Smaller eggplants tend to be less bitter and have fewer seeds.
2. Slice the eggplant into even rounds or lengthwise strips to ensure they cook evenly
3. Salt the eggplant and let sit for at least 30- minutes to reduce bitterness and remove excess moisture. Then rinse and pat dry
4. Dredge the eggplant in flour before frying this helps achieve a crispy exterior when fried.
5. Start with a layer of sauce at the bottom of your baking dish to prevent sticking.
6. Bake covered for the first 30- minutes to prevent the cheese from burning . then uncovered the last 15- minutes to get a rich golden brown crust. I have attached the link to my favorite all around lasagna covered casserole dish.
7. Allow the eggplant parmesan dish to rest for about 10 to 15 minutes to let the layers set.

Ingredients

- 2 medium eggplant
- 1 Tbsp. salt
- 1 cup of flour

- 3 cups of canola olive oil blend oil for frying
- 4 cups my easy marinara sauce
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella
- 2 cups fresh mozzarella
- 1 cup grated parmesan
- fresh basil leaves

Instructions

1. Start by washing your eggplant and slicing into thin rounds. place a colander over a bowl add the salted eggplant rounds add a weight to press the eggplant down. Let it sit for at least 30 minutes.
2. Then rinse the eggplant and pat dry then coat with the flour shaking off excess.
3. Bring the oil to medium high heat. Begin frying the eggplant slices in batches 2 to 3 minutes per side or until golden brown. Drain on paper towels.
4. In a 7 x 11 oven proof casserole dish begin with a layer of marinara then eggplant , then the cheese. Repeat the process beginning with the marinara sauce and ending with the eggplant topped with the marinara and more cheese.
5. Bake in a preheat 375-degree oven covered for 30 minutes, uncover and bake for 15 minutes longer or until cheese is slightly brown and bubbly. ENJOY!!!!

Pasta con broccoli

Pasta con broccoli

Pasta con broccoli or pasta with broccoli is a simple dish that's easy to make and incredibly comforting. With just a few ingredients, this pasta dish comes together in less than 30 minutes.

It is a great healthy recipe for a quick and easy weeknight meal that is both quick and delicious. Its ingredients broccoli, garlic, white wine and olive oil may sound simple, but when combined together with pasta and pasta water to form a creamy sauce something delicious happens.

A few variations for this Pasta con broccoli recipe

This classic broccoli pasta recipe has many variations. Of course the first and most obvious one in most of my recipes the pasta shape is always an option. I am using one of my favorite pasta shapes ditalini a small tubular pasta shape. You can use any pasta shape that fits your taste.

Secondly you can easily add Italian sausage to this vegetarian pasta recipe. If you are going to use sausage remove it from the casing and sautéing it along with the onion and garlic breaking it up while cooking to a golden brown before proceeding to adding the rest of the ingredients.

Or you could go vegan by omitting the cheese and using dairy free pasta.

These variations offer different flavors and textures while keeping broccoli as the main ingredient. Enjoy experimenting with them.

And lastly please let me know how this recipe or variations of it work out for you. I love hearing from you it's my favorite

part!!!

Ingredients

- 4 cups broccoli florets
- 3 cups of small shaped pasta
- 2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1/3 cup chopped onions
- 2 Tbsp. minced garlic
- 1 Tbsp. hot pepper flakes
- 1 cup white wine
- 2 cups pasta water
- 1 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 1 cup toasted Italian bread crumbs
- Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Start by cleaning and cutting the broccoli. Then in salted boiling water cook the broccoli until fork tender. remove and add to the saute pan. Add the pasta to the same water you cooked the broccoli un, until el dente
 2. Meanwhile in a saute pan over medium high heat un the olive oil saute the garlic, onion, and red pepper flakes until soft and fragrant. Add the white wine and simmer until almost evaporated then add the cooked broccoli and mash. Add the pasta water and simmer until sauce thickens . Add half of the parmesan. Toss the cooked and drained pasta to the broccoli mixture and mix until well combined. Plate top with the grated breadcrumbs and remaining parmesan cheese. ENJOY!!!!
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vegetable puff pastry tart

Vegetable puff pastry tart

If you enjoy easy recipes with delicious seasonal ingredients, this summer vegetable puff pastry tart recipe is for you. This tart has just a few ingredients. a crispy puff pastry crust ,a savory marinara and creamy mozzarella center and a topping of just picked summer vegetables.

This tart is great for a casual lunch or light dinner. Or it makes a great appetizer at your next cocktail party or summer barbeque. The tart can be sliced into finger – friendly pieces.

Tips for success when you make this Summer vegetable puff pastry tart

1. Choose the freshest vegetables you can find. Seasonal summer vegetables like zucchini and tomatoes work well.
2. Pre- baking the tart shell helps prevent a soggy crust. prick the crust with a fork to release moisture.
3. Salt the zucchini and tomatoes and let sit for 30 minutes or longer. This step helps extract liquid from the vegetables.
4. Cut the vegetables evenly and as thin as possible using a good kitchen knife or a mandoline slicer if you have one.
5. Season the vegetables well and arrange in a pretty pattern before re- baking for a tart that's not only delicious but pretty to look at too!!!

Ingredients

- 1 puff pastry shell
- 1 zucchini
- 2 medium tomatoes
- 1 Tbsp. salt
- 1 cup marinara
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella
- 1 Tbsp. each oregano, Italian parsley and garlic powder
- 2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Start by slicing the zucchini and tomatoes into as thin as possible rounds lay on a flat surface salt and let sit while preparing the puff pastry.
2. On a lightly floured broad roll out the pastry slightly. prick all over with a fork leaving a thin border not pricked. Prebake in a 350- degree preheated oven on a cookie sheet oven for 15 minutes or until just beginning to brown.
3. Mix all the herbs together
4. line the precooked puff pastry with a thin layer of marinara sauce top with 1/2 the mozzarella . Pat the zucchini and tomatoes dry with paper towels. Top the mozzarella with with the zucchini and tomatoes alternating first with zucchini then with the tomatoes, repeating the process. Sprinkle the vegetables with the herb mixture, the remaining mozzarella and marinara sauce salt and pepper to taste. drizzle with the olive oil and re bake in a 375- degree oven for 15 minutes. ENJOY!!!!
5. And so on

Crispy Zucchini scarpaccia

Crispy zucchini scarpaccia

Scarpaccia is a kind of rustic Italian flat bread from the Tuscany region of Italy, usually thin, and delicious.

Usually made with zucchini, there are as many variations for this vegetable tart as there are people who make them. I really like the thin, crispy texture and the slight sweetness from roasting the zucchini. I love this simple summer Italian snack. It is a simple recipe full of beautiful summer zucchini. This scarpaccia is perfectly crispy on the outside and chewy and tender on the inside. Topping it with cornmeal before baking adds a nice nutty crunch. This delicious summertime recipe can be a simple snack, fancied up into bite size appetizers, or a perfect side dish with a salad for an easy weeknight vegetarian meal.

Zucchini Scarpaccia recipes tips

Salting the zucchini and letting it sit extracts some of the liquid from the zucchini. Baking the zucchini before adding it to the batter also helps dry out the zucchini. These are important steps in achieving a crispy scarpaccia versus a soggy one. And using this water in the batter adds extra flavor.

Using the right size pan is important in any recipe. In this scarpaccia recipe I am using a 7" x 11" cookie sheet to get a thin crispy tart,

Ingredients

- 2 medium zucchini cut into rounds
- 1 Tbsp. salt
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil + 1/3 cup
- 1 cup finely chopped onion
- 1 1/2 cups of flour
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 1 tsp. each onion, garlic, paprika and oregano
- 1 1/2 cups of water + the water extract from the zucchini
- 1/3 cup corn meal

Instructions

1. Start by cutting the zucchini as thin as possible into rounds. Lay the rounds flat on a parchment lined cookie sheet , sprinkle with 1 Tbsp. of salt and let sit for 30 minutes to extract the liquid. Then pat dry with paper towels. Drizzle with 1 Tbsp. of olive oil and bake in a preheated 375-degree oven for 15 minutes.
 2. Meanwhile make the batter by mixing the rest of the ingredients except for the corn meal.
 3. Fold the baked zucchini into the batter. Spread the batter in a lightly greased 7 x 11 parchment lined cookie sheet.
 4. Cover the top lightly with the corn meal drizzle with olive oil, sprinkle with grated parmesan cheese. And bake in a preheated 375-degree oven for 45 to 60 minutes or until golden brown and crispy. Cut into squares.
ENJOY!!!
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20 minute tomato basil spaghetti

20 minute tomato basil spaghetti

This 20 minute tomato basil spaghetti comes together in under 20 minutes, the sauce is ready in just about the same time as it takes to cook the pasta.

The best time to make this pasta dish is when tomatoes are in season. The sauce is simple the liquid from the tomatoes combined with the pasta water and grated cheese create a sauce full of delicious fresh Italian flavors.

A few things to know about this 20 minute tomato basil spaghetti

With a few cups of tomatoes, garlic, herbs olive oil and pasta you can make this easy tomato sauce. Use as many tomato varieties as you can get your hands on. Any color any shape – the more the better. Their natural juices release into the pan along with the pasta water create a luscious sauce. This tomato sauce is meant to be chunky, it's not a smooth sauce. Use an emersion blend for a smoother finish,

Ingredients

- 1/2 Lb. spaghetti
- 4 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 2 Tbsp. minced garlic
- 4 Tbsp chopped shallots

- 4 cups chopped tomatoes
- 1 Tbsp. fresh or dried oregano
- 2 cups pasta water
- 4 Tbsp. fresh chopped basil
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan

Instructions

1. Start by cooking your pasta el dente reserving 2 cups before draining
2. mean while make the sauce starting by washing, drying and chopping the tomatoes. leave some cherry tomatoes whole.
3. In a saute pan over medium high heat add the 4 Tbsp. of olive oil add the garlic and the shallots saute until soft and just beginning to brown , Add the tomatoes, tomato sauce, oregano and pasta water cook until the sauce thickens about 10 minutes.
4. Toss the el dente cooked spaghetti into the sauce. top with freshly grated parmesan and basil. ENJOY!!!