

Roasted Butternut Squash Soup
by Chef Chris Macchia, Coco Pazzo Café

For the soup:

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1/2 cup (1/4-inch) diced onion
1/4 cup (1/4-inch) diced celery
1/4 cup (1/4-inch) diced carrot
1/4 cup (1/4-inch) diced leek
1 cinnamon stick
Sea salt & ground black pepper
About 4 cups chicken stock or canned low-salt chicken broth
1/2 teaspoon ground toasted nutmeg, optional
1 1/2 cups Roasted Winter Squash
1/2 cup heavy cream, optional

To serve:

1/4 cup mascarpone cheese, optional
2 tablespoons toasted pumpkin seeds, optional

Heat the olive oil and butter in a large saucepan over medium heat until hot. Add the onion, celery, carrot, and cinnamon stick and sauté until soft but not brown, about 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

Add the chicken stock and the nutmeg, and bring to a boil. Simmer for several minutes. Stir in the squash until smooth, then simmer gently to let the flavors meld, about 10 minutes. Discard the cinnamon stick.

Puree the soup in a blender until smooth. (The soup can be made ahead to this point, cooled, covered, and refrigerated for several days or frozen for about 1 month. It will thicken as it cools and may need thinning with stock or water when reheating.)

Return the soup to the pan and reheat gently. Add the heavy cream. Adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper. Keep warm until service.

To serve:

Ladle the soup into serving bowls. Garnish evenly, with the cheese and pumpkin seeds, if desired. Other garnishes that also complement this soup would be fried sage or crushed amoretti cookies.