



Silky Butternut Squash Soup

Cook's Illustrated

If you don't own a folding steamer basket, a pasta pot with a removable pasta insert works well. Instead of pureeing in a blender, I put the liquid and squash back in the pot after straining and pureed with a stick blender.

Makes 1 1/2 quarts, serving 4 to 6

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 medium shallots, *minced (about 4 tablespoons)*
- 3 pounds butternut squash (*about 1 large*), *unpeeled, squash halved lengthwise, seeds and stringy fibers scraped with spoon and reserved (about 1/4 cup), and each half cut into quarters*
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon dark brown sugar

Heat butter in large Dutch oven over medium-low heat until foaming; add shallots and cook, stirring frequently, until softened and translucent, about 3 minutes. Add squash scrapings and seeds and cook, stirring occasionally, until fragrant and butter turns saffron color, about 4 minutes. Add 6 cups water and 1 1/2 teaspoons salt to Dutch oven and bring to boil over high heat; reduce heat to medium-low, place squash cut-side down in steamer basket, and lower basket into pot. Cover and steam until squash is completely tender, about 30 minutes to 1 hour. Off heat, use tongs to transfer squash to rimmed baking sheet; reserve steaming liquid. When cool enough to handle, use large spoon to scrape flesh from skin into medium bowl; discard skin.

Pour reserved steaming liquid through mesh strainer into second bowl; discard solids in strainer. Wipe out Dutch oven.

In blender, puree squash and reserved liquid in batches, pulsing on low until smooth. Transfer puree to Dutch oven; stir in cream and brown sugar and heat over medium-low heat until hot. Add salt to taste; serve immediately.

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