

Spicy Butternut Squash Soup with Black Beans, Red Bell Pepper, and Cilantro

recipe from KalynsKitchen.com

1 large butternut squash (about 1.5 lbs.)
salt and fresh ground black pepper, for seasoning squash
2 tsp. olive oil
2 cups finely chopped onion
2 cups finely chopped celery
6 cloves of garlic, finely minced (about 1 T minced garlic)
6 cups vegetable stock or canned vegetable broth (or slightly more, if you'd like a thinner soup)
2 tsp. ground cumin (or more)
1 can (15 oz.) black beans
1 medium red bell pepper, chopped small
1/2 cup chopped cilantro (plus more to garnish soup if desired)
1-2 T Green Tabasco Sauce (or finely chopped jalapeno)
low-fat sour cream or plain Greek yogurt to garnish soup (if desired)
crushed tortilla chips to sprinkle in the soup if desired

Preheat oven or toasted oven to 400F/200C. Cut butternut squash in half and scoop out seeds. Place squash on a baking sheet and season with salt and fresh ground black pepper. Roast squash until it is soft enough to pierce easily with a fork, and starting to slightly brown, about 50-60 minutes. Let squash cool enough to handle.

While squash is roasting, chop onion and celery and mince the garlic. Heat olive oil in large non-stick soup pot and sauté onions and celery until they're soft, about 7 minutes. Add minced garlic and cook 2-3 minutes more. Add 2 cups of vegetable broth and simmer the mixture about 10 minutes.

As soon as the squash has cooled enough to handle, scrape the flesh away with the skin and mix it with the other 4 cups of broth and the ground cumin. Add this mixture to the soup pot and simmer about 20 minutes; then use an Immersion blender, blender, or food processor to puree the soup. While the soup simmers, rinse the black beans well with cold water and let them drain in a colander. Chop the cilantro and red bell pepper. After you're pureed the soup add the beans, red bell pepper, and cilantro and simmer about 15-20 minutes more, adding a little more vegetable stock if you'd like a thinner soup. Stir in the Green Tabasco Sauce to taste and serve hot, garnished with low-fat sour cream or plain Greek yogurt if desired and tortilla chips if desired.