



Although a winter squash it is now available all year round in supermarkets. It looks like a large, smooth, cylindrical peanut with a slightly bulbous base.

These can be stored whole in a cool pantry. Once cut, then store in the fridge in a polythene bag. Peel off the hard, pale butterscotch-brown skin before cooking and remove the seeds (these tend to be in the bulbous base). The flesh is cut into chunks before cooking, it is lovely just roasted since it has a sweet flavour but can also be added to stews and soups.



Butternut Squash Soup

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes to 1 hour

serves

4

Ingredients

- 1 butternut squash, weighing 450g (1lb)
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 litre (1 $\frac{3}{4}$ pint) vegetable stock
- 125ml (4fl oz) white wine
- 2 sprigs of fresh thyme

- 1 bayleaf
- 1-2 tsp freshly grated nutmeg
- salt and freshly ground pepper
- 150ml (1/4 pint) soured cream
- 2 tbsp stripped chives

Method

- Peel and slice the butternut squash, discard the seeds. Put the prepared squash into a large saucepan with the onion, garlic, stock and white wine.
- Bring the squash to the boil and add the thyme and bayleaf, season lightly with salt and pepper and cook over a low heat for 28-30 minutes or until the squash is tender.
- Transfer the mixture to a food processor and whizz to form a purée. Return to the rinsed out saucepan and bring back to the boil, season to taste with nutmeg and add more seasoning if needed.
- Adjust the consistency of the soup, if necessary with a little extra stock or milk, it should be the consistency of double cream.

Spoon the hot soup into individual bowls, swirl some soured cream on top, and finish with a sprinkling of chives.