

Eat Happy Kitchen

Anna Vocino

BEEF STUFFED ACORN SQUASH WITH MARINARA AND FRIED SAGE LEAVES

(Serves 2)

- 1 acorn squash, halved, seeds discarded
- 2 tablespoons pine nuts
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh sage leaves
- 1/2 sweet onion, diced
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic (2 cloves)
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1/2 teaspoon salt, plus more for seasoning
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground white pepper
- 1 cup Eat Happy Kitchen [Pumpkin Marinara](#), make your own from the recipe in *Eat Happy Too*, or use any flavor of marinara you prefer

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Place the acorn squash halves face down on a baking sheet or casserole dish and cook for 30-35 minutes, or until the squash is soft when shell is pressed. Remove from the oven and let cool while cooking the filling. Carefully scoop out the squash flesh into a small mixing bowl, keeping the shells in tact for serving.

Heat a small nonstick sauté pan to medium high heat and toast the pine nuts until fragrant and starting to turn golden brown, being careful not to burn them, about 3-4 minutes. Remove the pine nuts to a plate and heat the olive oil in the same small pan on medium high heat until the oil is hot and

shimmering. Add the sage leaves and let them toast until crispy, about 1-2 minutes, being careful not to burn them. Remove the sage leaves with a slotted spoon from the olive oil and set the leaves aside to drain on a paper towel. Season the fried sage leaves with salt. Pour the remainder of the olive oil into a large, flat-bottomed nonstick sauté pan.

Bring the large sauté pan to medium high heat, until the oil is hot and shimmering once again, and cook the onion until soft, about 2-3 minutes. Add the minced garlic and cook an additional 1 minute. Then brown the ground beef, using a spatula to separate the beef into small pieces. Cook the beef about 3-4 minutes, until cooked thoroughly. Stir in the salt, cinnamon, allspice, nutmeg, and white pepper. Add in the toasted pine nuts and Pumpkin Marinara, mixing evenly. Season the slightly cooled squash with salt and fold it into the meat mixture. Scoop the mixture back into the squash shells and serve, garnished with fried sage leaves.

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