

The COUNTRY GARDENS



ACORN SQUASH CHEESE SPREAD WITH SPINACH AND ARTICHOKES

INGREDIENTS:

2 acorn squash

4 oz fresh spinach, chopped

2 oz Neufchatel cheese

2 cups Gruyere cheese, grated

fresh baguette, sliced

2 tbsp butter

7 oz canned artichoke hearts, drained

1 cup half and half

salt and pepper, to taste

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Line a deep roasting/baking pan with aluminum foil.

Slice the acorn squash in half crosswise (one half is the top of the squash with the stem, the other is the bottom half, making four small bowl shapes). Use a spoon to remove the seeds. Slice a small piece off the bottom of the squash pieces so they can sit upright in the pan without falling over.

Place the squash in the roasting pan and season lightly with salt and pepper.

Next, melt the butter in a large pan over medium heat. Add the spinach leaves and allow them to wilt for about 2 minutes. Add the artichoke hearts and saute for an additional 3-4 minutes. Remove pan from the heat and set aside.

In a large bowl, mix together the Neufchatel cheese and the half and half. Add in the spinach and artichoke mixture and stir until incorporated. Ladle this mixture into the squash halves, about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up.

Add the freshly grated Gruyere cheese to the top of each squash half.

Cover the roasting pan with a sheet of aluminum foil and place in the oven to bake for one hour, until squash becomes tender. If you'd like your baguette to be warm, place it in the oven wrapped in aluminum foil in the last few minutes of baking.

Finally, remove the aluminum foil from the top of the roasting pan (and remove the bread if it is being warmed), turn the broiler to high, and cook for an additional 5 minutes, until cheese is golden brown and bubbling.

Remove from oven and carefully place the squash halves in bowls or serving plates alongside baguette. Dip, spread, and enjoy!