

Thai Butternut Squash Bisque

- ~ 4 lbs winter squash (butternut, Hubbard, buttercup or other), halved and seeded
- 2 tablespoons (1/4 stick) butter
- 1 ½ cups onion, chopped
- 1 cup carrots, chopped
- 1 medium sweet potato, chopped
- ½ large red pepper, chopped
- 1 apple, peeled and chopped
- 1 T fresh ginger, minced
- 2 tsp Thai red chili paste (in the Asian foods section of your ordinary grocery store)
- 6 cups vegetable broth or water
- 2 bay leaves (do not puree)
- 1 can coconut milk
- ½ cup half-and-half (optional)
- ½ cup sour cream
- 1T lemon juice
- Chopped fresh cilantro and roasted squash seeds for garnish

Preheat oven to 375°F. Brush cut side of squash with oil; place squash, cut side down, on large rimmed baking sheet. Roast until soft, about 1 hour and cool. Scoop squash from rind. Mash 3 cups for this recipe and refrigerate the rest for another use.

Melt **butter** in large pot over medium-high heat. Add **onion** and sauté until translucent. Add **carrots, sweet potato, red pepper** and **apple**; sauté until coated with butter, then cover over low heat until veggies are soft, 5-10 minutes, stirring frequently. Add **chili paste** and **ginger**; stir 2 minutes. Add **broth, bay leaves**, and 3 cups **squash**. Simmer, uncovered and stirring frequently to avoid scorching, for up to one hour. Fish out and discard bay leaves. Working in batches, puree soup in blender with ½ and ½ and **coconut milk** to achieve a “bisquey” texture. Return to pot and reheat. Whisk in **sour cream** and then **lemon juice**. Season with salt and pepper. Rewarm to serve (Don’t boil!). Divide soup among bowls. Garnish with **cilantro** and **roasted seeds**. Serves 6-10 people.