



BRAISED DELICATA SQUASH WITH LOBSTER AND SAUSAGE STUFFING

 1.5 hours

Meal Difficulty

 Serves 4



COOKING DIRECTIONS

- 1 Fill the bottom of a 12" skillet with just over a half inch of water and bring to a boil with a lid over high heat. Add half a lemon, some fresh thyme, some garlic, and a healthy sprinkle of kosher salt.
- 2 While the water is coming to a boil, drive a sharp and sturdy knife through the carapace of each lobster between the eyes to dispatch the lobsters before steaming. Carefully remove the lid of the skillet to avoid hot steam and add the lobsters.
- 3 Replace the lid and steam the lobsters until completely red—8.5 minutes per pound. Using 1.25lbs lobsters, this will be slightly under 11 minutes. A good trick to assess if lobsters are fully cooked: check to see if the antennae extending from near the eyes can be plucked and easily removed without force. If the antennae don't detach with minimal effort, the lobsters need a bit more time to steam.
- 4 Careful once again to avoid the hot steam, remove the lobsters with long metal tongs and let cool on a plate.
- 5 Add two turns of canola oil to a 12" skillet over high heat. Once the oil is nearly smoking, add the sausage in a thin, even layer to the skillet to brown. Season the sausage with salt and fresh cracked pepper. Flip the sausage and brown the other side, stirring around in the pan as it cooks.
- 6 Deglaze with a splash of bourbon, add a few ounces of chicken stock, and cover with a lid.
- 7 While the sausage is cooking, shuck the lobsters and set aside the lobster meat. Retain the legs as well as the shell from the claws, tail, and carapace.
- 8 When the sausage is fully cooked, remove and let cool. Leave the remaining cooking liquid in the skillet.
- 9 Add the retained lobster shells to the cooking liquid in the skillet. Add half an onion, half a lemon, thyme, garlic, and the rest of the chicken stock. Let this simmer and slightly reduce—this will be used as a braising liquid for the squash rounds.
- 10 While the stock reduces slightly, cut the ends off the delicata squash and slice into three equally thick rounds. Remove the seeds and innards.
- 11 Once the stock is hot, slightly reduced, and aromatic, remove the shells, herbs, and allium and pour into a bowl to slightly cool.
- 12 Wipe the skillet dry, put over high heat, and heat canola oil until nearly smoking. Add the squash pieces to the hot skillet and season with salt and pepper.
- 13 Once good color has developed on the squash rounds, flip each and sear the other side, seasoning with salt and pepper.
- 14 While the squash is braising, combine the cooked sausage, most of the lobster meat (retain some to add to the finished dish as part of the pan sauce), handful of crumbled ritz crackers, chopped parsley, salt, pepper, a drizzle of melted butter, and the canned squash together in a large bowl and thoroughly mix.

INGREDIENTS

1 large or 2x small delicata squashes
2 1.25lbs hard shell, live lobster
32oz of chicken stock
2oz of canned squash puree (canned pumpkin for pie-making is a good substitute if needed)
8oz of beef, pork, or lamb-based breakfast sausage (any kind of sausage will work—the maple and fennel used in breakfast sausage goes quite well with lobster and squash)
1 stick of unsalted butter – half melted, half whole
1 small yellow onion
1 bunch of fresh thyme
1 bunch of fresh parsley (Italian or curly is fine)
2 lemons
1 head of garlic
1 small sleeve of ritz crackers
2oz bourbon
soft herbs, as desired, for garnish – chives or parsley suggested
canola oil for searing
kosher salt
fresh ground pepper

- 15 Once the squash is tender and cooked through, drain off and discard about 2/3 of the remaining cooking liquid. Next, add the sausage and lobster mix to the hollow interiors of the squash rounds, letting it mound over on top of the squash.
- 16 Let the stuffed squash rounds continue to cook, uncovered, for a few more minutes until the cooking liquid is once again bubbling. Add the rest of the reserved lobster meat. Add the rest of the remaining bourbon and a 1oz nub of butter, stirring until the butter melts and incorporates into a sauce.
- 17 Garnish with freshly cut soft herbs and serve.