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Roasted Butternut Squash Cubes with Maple Syrup and Cinnamon

I consider butternut squash to be the Queen of winter squashes. It's easy to grow, highly nutritious, very sweet and extremely versatile. You can roast it, bake it, boil it or mash it. I use it in a variety of side dishes, soups, risottos, lasagnas, pies and quick breads. Even though they might look a bit intimidating at first, they're very easy to work with. Butternut squashes have a thin skin, about the thickness of a cucumber, which makes them easy to peel and the bright orange flesh is firm but not hard so it's easy to cut.

1 four pound butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cut into one inch cubes
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons 100% pure maple syrup, warmed
1 tablespoon cinnamon

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.

Line a rimmed baking pan with nonstick foil.

Place the squash cubes in a gallon zipper bag and add the olive oil.

Close the bag, removing as much air as possible, and "massage" the bag to evenly coat the squash cubes with the oil.

Put the squash cubes in a single layer on the baking sheet and roast for 20-25 minutes or until the edges begin to brown just a bit and they are fork tender.

Pile the squash on a serving platter and drizzle immediately with the warm maple syrup.

Sprinkle with the cinnamon and serve.

Serves 4-6.

Note: If you prefer a less sweet side dish, omit the maple syrup and cinnamon and drizzle the roasted squash with 2 tablespoons of warm, melted unsalted butter, a teaspoon of smoked paprika and salt and pepper to taste.

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