

A Shot of Pumpkin



Ingredients

1 2-lb. pie pumpkin*

3 Tbsp. olive oil, divided

1 small Vidalia onion, peeled and chopped

3 garlic cloves, minced

2 carrots, peeled and chopped

1 tsp. ground cinnamon

1 tsp. allspice

1 tsp. fresh ginger, minced

2 Tbsp. sage leaves, chopped

1 bay leaf

3 cups vegetable broth

1 Tbsp. maple agave or maple syrup

Salt and pepper to taste

1/2 cup unsweetened almond milk

1/4 cup light unsweetened coconut milk

6 bacon strips

Fresh parsley for garnish

Directions:

Wash the exterior of the pumpkin in cool water and cut it in half. Scoop out the seeds and scrape the inside, using a metal ice cream server or large spoon to remove the stringy fibers.

Place the pumpkin halves cut-side down in a large baking dish filled with 1/4 inch of water.

Drizzle with olive oil.

Bake at 375 F for 45 to 60 minutes or until tender, but not falling apart. When ready, remove from oven, transfer the pumpkin to a platter, and let it cool on the counter a bit. Using the same baking dish for cooking the pumpkin, put in the onions, garlic, and carrots; roast for 15 minutes or until tender. Once the pumpkin has cooled enough for handling, peel away the rind and dice the pumpkin.

In a pot with 1-1/2 teaspoons of olive oil, sauté the spices for one minute over medium heat. Add the broth, syrup, pumpkin, and vegetables; bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes. Remove and discard the bay leaf.

Workings in batches, puree the soup in a blender. Return the liquid to the pot; add salt and pepper to taste. Stir in almond and coconut milk; continue simmering to keep the soup warm. Fry

bacon strips until crisp. To serve, pour soup into small glasses; garnish with Italian parsley and one strip of bacon per glass. Makes about 6 servings.

Helpful Tips:

Pie pumpkins are small, sweeter, and less grainy than larger pumpkins. Look for ones that are richly orange-colored and without bruises or soft spots.

Using a serrated knife and cutting in sawing motion works best when preparing the pumpkin.

Hand-held immersion blenders are excellent because they eliminate the need for transferring contents.