

MILLET-STUFFED PUMPKIN

Wheat-free Gluten-free Dairy-free

This recipe might sound basic however it is delightful when served with black beans and a simple rocket salad with balsamic dressing. It is not difficult but it does require some advance planning. *Serves 4*

Ingredients:

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup millet, covered with cool water and soaked for 6-10 hours
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups water
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt
- 2 small pumpkins (e.g. butternut, honey delight, gold nugget)
- 1 medium onion, finely diced
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter or light sesame oil for frying
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp ground turmeric
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp cumin seed
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp klonji (onion Seed – from East Indian grocery stores/natural food markets)
- 1 small hot green chilli (jalapeno) seeded and minced
- 1 stalk celery, finely diced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt, or to taste
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped pecans
- 2 tbsp finely chopped parsley
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup unsalted butter (or dairy-free substitute)
- 1 tbsp peeled and minced fresh ginger
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp ground nutmeg
- 2 tbsp pure maple syrup
- 2 tbsp extra chopped pecans

Method:

Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Drain the soaked millet and transfer to a medium saucepan. Add water and salt to the millet, bring to the boil, lower the heat, cover and cook until dry and fluffy, about 15-25 minutes.

Make a small cut in the side of each pumpkin where you will eventually cut it in half, before placing it on an oiled pan and baking until cooked but firm, about 45 minutes to 1 hour.

Remove pumpkin from the oven (leave the oven on) and let them cool until you can handle them.

Carefully cut each pumpkin in half and scoop out the seeds, and then place the cut side up on an oiled baking pan.

In a heavy frying pan at medium-high heat, sauté the onion in butter/oil until the onion is sweet and golden brown.

Add turmeric, cumin seed and klonji. Cook until the cumin is fragrant. Then, add the chilli and celery and sauté only until the celery turns bright green. Remove from the heat and add the parsley and pecans. Stir in the pre-cooked millet.

Melt butter in a small saucepan add ginger and nutmeg. Cook until the ginger is a light colour. Remove from the heat and add the maple syrup.

To assemble the stuffed pumpkin place the cut open side up on the oiled baking pan. Prick the flesh of the pumpkin approximately 1cm deep. Drizzle the ginger butter evenly over the pumpkin.

Fill the pumpkin with the millet pilaf mixture, mounding it firmly and leaving a ring of the pumpkin visible around the edges.

Top with the remaining pecans and bake until the pumpkin is hot and the top of the stuffing is golden brown, approximately 10 – 15 minutes.