Quinoa Stuffed Acorn Squash

Ingredients

• ¾ cup dry quinoa
• 1½ cups vegetable broth, low sodium or water
• 2 acorn squash (medium-sized)
• 2 tablespoons olive oil + more for brushing acorn flesh
• 1 small onion, finely diced
• 1 stalk celery, finely diced
• 1 large apple, diced
• 8 ounces cremini mushrooms, diced
• ½ cup dried cranberries
• 3 cloves garlic, minced
• 1 teaspoon thyme
• ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
• 1 teaspoon Himalayan salt (or preferred salt), more to taste
• Fresh cracked pepper, to taste
• 2 tablespoons pure maple syrup (*Optional)
Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit.

2. Cut a thin slice off the bottom of each squash to create a flat edge, so the squash can stand up *(don’t cut too much or it will leave a hole)*. Cut stems off the tops if they protrude. Now cut each squash horizontally in half. Scoop out the membranes and seeds inside of the squash & discard.

3. Place the squash on a rimmed baking sheet, cut-side up. Brush the inside with olive oil and sprinkle with salt & pepper. *(Optional: lightly brush with maple syrup to add a subtle sweetness)* Roast the squash for about 35-45 minutes, or until tender (test with a fork).

4. Add the quinoa and broth to a medium pot. Bring to a boil and then turn heat down to maintain a low simmer. Cover with lid and cook until liquid is gone and quinoa is fluffy. This usually takes about 15-20 minutes to cook. Remove from heat and fluff with fork. Set aside.

5. In a large pan, heat 2 tablespoons of oil over medium heat. Sauté the onion, celery, apples until softened. About 5-6 minutes

6. Add the mushrooms, cranberries, garlic, sage, thyme, cinnamon, salt, and pepper. Sauté about 7-9 minutes, or until mushrooms and cranberries are tender *(if food sticks to the pan, you can splash a little vegetable broth or white wine to deglaze)*.

7. Remove from heat and add the cooked quinoa. Combine well and taste for seasoning, add more as needed.

8. When the squash is ready, fill with the stuffing mixture. *(optional: drizzle/spritz top of stuffing with oil for a crispier top)*. Place in oven and bake 10-15 minutes, until the quinoa is lightly browned & crispy.