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I want to be real with you when I write and share about food. I'm not one of those 'eat to live' kinda gals. Sure there are some things I consume primarily because they provide outstanding nutrition to my cells. But, even those things over time (aka: my morning green smoothie) grow on me to the point that I crave them if I'm forced to go without. Most foods I eat because I LIKE THEM....a lot. I enjoy certain textures, tastes and flavor combinations.

I prepare my family's food around my taste appeal almost as much as I consider good nutrition. Thankfully, I've been blessed with the desire to experiment long and diligently enough that the two, my taste appeal and good nutrition, have pleasingly collided.

It didn't happen overnight, my authentic desire to eat well for both the flavor and the nourishment of it. Little by little I explored new options and healthier substitutes. It was one step at a time, just like I suggest you embark on developing your own real food palate. Eventually, you'll learn that whole, nutritious foods feel good and fulfill your eating preferences also.

I think what I am trying to tell you is this: **You can eat what you love and still nourish your body with real, whole foods! Yes, at the same time!** It may take time to get your tastes and good nutrition to collide (or at least compliment one another). But, it is possible, I promise. Plus, that's why I'm here with you! Hopefully I'll be able to help you find ideas and recipes that work for you and your family...alongside knowing it's OKAY to eat for flavor and comfort. Of course, let's not take that too far. We all know what too much comfort-eating can lead to....let's explore that just a little:

Eating your favorite flavorful comfort foods is far different than comfort eating. For me, eating a comfort food is like sinking my teeth into something so tastefully satisfying that my tastebuds water and my mind relaxes just knowing I'm making a choice to eat something I love. It's a treat, not just for taste but for nourishment of body and soul.

In contrast, comfort eating covers up emotions better dealt with without food. Comfort eating, often

unconscious, leads you to consume without really even identifying flavor and certainly ends without much genuine enjoyment. Before you know it, you've eaten several servings of something just masking the moment's matter at hand.

Comfort eating creates guilt while finding a food comforting offers satiety to mouth and mind. See the difference?

Let's get to talking about this recipe....Squash is a strange example of a comfort food for me. I could seriously eat a whole butternut without batting an eye! Anyone who knows me knows that I have a 'thing' for orange foods, particularly those creamy and warm like squash and sweet potatoes. The darker the orange the better. Maybe my body needs the beta-carotene and bountiful amounts of vitamin C. Or maybe it's simply a personal preference. Who knows! But, squash feels comforting, warm and reassuring. That's a comfort food in my book!

However, when I feel stressed or anxious, I'm not diving into the leftover bowl of orange, creamy butternut! Instead, I mindlessly wander to the pantry only to find myself filled with chocolate chips a few minutes later without knowing what just happened. No enjoyment or savoring to speak of...just a half full bag of emotional eating evidence.

Get it? Let's stick with comfort food as opposed to eating for comfort, huh?

So, for me squash is where it's at and it was this dish that got me to thinking about finding comfort in our food. I'm good with it! And I think you should be too! We are blessed with rich flavors from the earth and countless ways to combine them. So, find comforting in the blessings at your table's bounty! What foods offer mind, body comfort to you?

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Ingredients

- 8 cups cubed, peeled butternut squash
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 4 cups organic vegetable broth (I use low sodium)
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 cups uncooked wild rice blend
- 2 tablespoons butter or ghee (clarified butter)
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½ - 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg (to your taste preferences)
- 1 cup grated parmesan cheese (or I prefer using a hard goat cheese)

Recipe Instructions

- Preheat oven to 450 degrees F.
- In a large bowl, combine the squash, 2 tablespoons of the oil, salt and pepper. Toss to coat the squash cubes. Transfer to a prepared (lightly buttered or sprayed) 15x10x1 inch baking dish. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until tender, stirring once.
- Meanwhile, in a large saucepan, cook wild rice blend in the vegetable broth per package instructions.
- In a large skillet, sauté onion and garlic in remaining oil until tender.
- When rice is cooked, stir in onion, garlic, butter and spices. Gently stir in squash and cheese so as not to squash the squash!
- Serve immediately and enjoy!

Featured Image



Gallery



Recipe Description

For me, this is winter's comfort in a cup. The warmth, the creamy marriage of rice and squash and knowing I'm nourishing my body are all reasons I love it. Filled with fiber, folate, beta-carotene and vitamin C I hope this dish has you coming back for more!

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