

Spiced Butternut Squash with Ricotta, Lemon, Chili and Marcona almonds

This tapa would make a great side dish to any roast or cut of meat. It is a great example of how simple vegetables can easily be made into an exciting dish. Squash is great for this but you could use pumpkin or even a mix of root vegetables.

Try to find a good quality ricotta from an Italian deli-a nice Buffalo milk one would be great. Marcona almonds are the best almonds you can find and are regarded as 'the Queen' of almonds. They come from South Eastern Spain and are sweet and buttery. You should be able to find these at any Spanish food store. Otherwise plain roasted almonds will work fine.

serves 4 as a Tapa

- 1 large butternut squash
- 1 pinch ground cinnamon
- 1 pinch ground sweet paprika
- 1 sprig rosemary finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic finely chopped
- 1 zest of lemon
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley
- 20g chopped Marcona almonds
- 10g chopped chili
- 100g ricotta
- 50ml olive oil

Start by cutting the squash in half and scooping out all the seeds. Leave the skin on and cut the squash into large pieces about 3cm cubed. Put into a bowl and marinate with the cinnamon, paprika, rosemary, garlic, a little olive oil and salt and pepper. Mix this all thoroughly so the squash is well covered. Place onto an oven tray and roast on a high heat (200 C) for around 20-30 minutes. The squash needs to be soft and be a little brown around the edges.

While the squash is roasting, place the chili in the rest of the olive oil and gently warm on a low heat. Do not boil. This takes the rawness out of the chili and will be used as a dressing for the dish.

Place the squash onto two plates and crumble over the ricotta, lemon zest, parsley and almonds. Finish the dish with the chili and drizzle a little of the oil over the top.