

Autumn's Bounty

Easy Autumn Recipes

Story, Recipes, and Photos by Kaitlin Hill

Celebrate the arrival of autumn with these easy recipes packed with fall flavors. For dinner, try my slightly spicy kale and butternut squash pasta. This vegetarian-friendly dish is undeniably hearty with tender butternut squash, melted mozzarella, and a hint of chili flake for warmth. This dish is as easy to make as it is to devour, coming together in just under an hour. I've got dessert covered, too, with my spiced pear tart in a flakey all-butter crust. The pears are cooked in a mixture of butter, brown sugar, cinnamon, ginger, allspice, and cloves, resulting in a gooey, subtly sweet, nicely spiced, and irresistible filling.

Kale and Butternut Squash Pasta

Ingredients:

3 tablespoons of olive oil
2 pounds of cubed butternut squash, fresh or frozen
1 teaspoon of granulated garlic
½ - 1 teaspoon of red pepper flakes
3 cups of chopped kale
1 pound of penne pasta
¾ cup of grated Parmesan
1 (8-ounce) ball of fresh mozzarella, cubed
½ cup of basil leaves
Salt and pepper, to taste

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 400°F.

Bring a large pot of water to a boil and, once boiling, add a pinch of salt. Add the pasta and cook until al dente, about 10–11 minutes. Drain the pasta, reserving ¼ cup of pasta water, and set the pasta aside.

In an ovenproof skillet, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the butternut squash, garlic, red-pepper flakes, and salt and pepper to taste. Cook for 10–15 minutes until the butternut squash is tender.

Add the kale, ¼ cup of pasta water, pasta, and ½ cup of Parmesan. Toss to combine and cook for 2–3 minutes until the kale has wilted.

Dot the pasta with the cubed mozzarella and top with the remaining ¼ cup of Parmesan. Transfer to the oven and bake for 12–15 minutes until bubbling and browned.

Top with the basil leaves and serve immediately.

Spiced Pear Tart

Ingredients:

2 cups of flour
1 teaspoon of sugar
1 teaspoon of salt
2 sticks of unsalted butter, cubed
5–6 tablespoons of ice water
4 pears, cubed (I used a mix of D’Anjou and Bartlett)
4 tablespoons of butter
¼ cup of brown sugar
½ teaspoon of salt
1 teaspoon of cinnamon
½ teaspoon of ginger
1/8 teaspoon of cloves
1/8 teaspoon of allspice
1 tablespoon of cornstarch
1 egg and 1 tablespoon of water mixed
9-inch tart pan

Directions:

In the bowl of a food processor, pulse together the flour, sugar, and salt. Add the cubed butter and pulse until the butter is the size of peas. With the motor running, drizzle in the water slowly until the dough starts to pull away from the sides of the processor. Remove the dough from the food processor, divide it into two portions, wrap each portion in plastic wrap, and place it in the fridge to chill for an hour.

While the dough chills, make the filling. Melt the butter in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the cubed pears, brown sugar, salt and spices. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the pears are just tender, about 10 minutes.

Let the pear mixture chill to room temperature.

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

When the dough has chilled, working with one portion at a time, roll the dough out on a generously floured surface until it is an inch larger than your tart pan.

Lay the dough in the tart pan and carefully work it into the bottom and the sides using your fingers. Remove any excess dough from around the edge of the tart pan.

Spread the pear filling in the bottom crust.

Now, working with the top crust, roll it out until it is 10-inches in diameter. Cover the tart with top crust however you like. I did a lattice and used extra dough to make decorative leaves.

Brush the crust with the egg wash and place the tart in the preheated oven for 1 hour until bubbling and golden brown. Let cool slightly before serving.