

Roasted Butternut Squash

1 medium butternut squash
c 50g butter
1 medium garlic clove, finely chopped
a little olive oil
salt and freshly ground black pepper
200g Gruyere cheese, grated (Cheddar would do) 250 gm mushrooms, chopped

Preheat the oven to 195C/gas 5-6. Make sure the outside of the squash is perfectly clean. Cut the squash in half lengthways and scoop out the seeds and soft fibres. Put in an ovenproof dish, put a little chopped garlic and a small nut of butter in each cavity, brush with olive oil, season well, and bake for about an hour, until the flesh feels very tender when pierced with the tip of a knife.

Saute the chopped mushrooms in a mix of butter and olive oil and set aside.

When the squash is cooked, fully scoop out the soft flesh, and the buttery, garlicky juices, into a bowl, leaving a 1cm-thick layer of flesh still attached to the skin, so the squash holds its shape. Roughly mash the flesh. Add the mushrooms and grated cheese. Add ground black pepper and a tiny bit of salt. Keep back a few shavings of cheese. Spoon the filling back into the two empty squash halves and scatter on the reserved cheese. Place under the grill for 3-4 minutes until golden brown and sprinkle chopped chives over the top (if you have some).

Non-vegetarians could fry up some chopped streaky bacon with the mushrooms.

Shelagh Woolliscroft