

Creamy Curried Butternut-Cauliflower Soup – Comfort du Jour

This soup will help you slide nicely into autumn, with its bright and light vegetable flavors, seasoned with warm, aromatic Indian spices, and made richer with a last-minute swirl of cream. This is a recipe that moves along a sliding scale in many ways—you can make it with anything from chicken bone broth to vegetable broth, or spicy to mild, or light to creamy (either with real cream or coconut milk).

I've chosen pungent garam masala to season the soup, plus a few extras to suit our individual taste. Garam masala literally translates as “warm spice mixture,” implying that the spices make you feel warm inside, and that certainly is the case with this creamy, autumn-embracing soup. It brings a whole lot of healthy to a weekend meal (or meatless Monday), and you may as well make a large batch of it, because the leftovers will warm up in a jiffy for weekday lunches or dinner. Serve it with a salad or sandwich for a completely satisfying, healthy meal.

This recipe makes approximately 8 servings. I made it on the stovetop, but it's easily adapted to a slow cooker.

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups butternut squash, peeled and cubed
- 3 cups fresh cauliflower, cleaned, trimmed and chopped into florets
- 1 cup carrots, chopped
- 3 cups low sodium vegetable broth*
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 3-4 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil, drizzled over vegetables
- 1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 medium sweet or yellow onion, chopped (about 1 cup)
- 5 cloves garlic, chopped (about 3 Tbsp.)
- 1 tsp. garam masala*
- 1 tsp. ginger
- 1/4 tsp. turmeric
- 1/4 tsp. ground cardamom
- 1/4 tsp. ground cayenne (optional)
- 1/2 can coconut milk (regular or light), added just before serving
- Chopped pistachios and crispy spiced chickpeas, if desired, for serving

*NOTES

Vegetable broth ingredients vary by brand, and your choice can have impact on the overall flavors of your dish. My go-to broth does not include tomatoes, and that works in my favor here, as tomatoes are a less common ingredient in Asian or Indian cooking. Also, choosing low sodium versions helps me keep the salt levels in check for the final dish. If you're not keeping it vegan, you might also choose a low sodium chicken broth here.

Garam masala is a pre-made blend of spices, including cumin, black pepper, ginger, coriander and cardamom. If you happen to have the individual spice ingredients, there's no need to purchase the blend. Combine small amounts of each and adjust based on your taste preferences.

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INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place a large stock pot over medium heat. Add squash, cauliflower and carrots, plus 2 cups broth. Drizzle with 3 Tbsp. olive oil. Simmer 1 hour (or in slow cooker on high for 2 hours).
2. Sauté onions until softened, caramelized and browned on edges, add garlic and seasonings and sauté 5 more minutes. When soup pot vegetables are soft enough to mash with a fork, add the onion-spice mixture and simmer another hour (or in slow cooker an additional 2 hours).
3. Use immersion blender to puree soup to desired smoothness. Add more vegetable broth if needed for easy blending. Alternatively, allow mixture to cool somewhat, and transfer mix to a regular blender (in batches if necessary), then return soup to mixing pot. Taste and adjust seasonings as desired, simmer on low until ready to serve or refrigerate if cooking ahead.
4. Just before serving, stir in 1/2 can regular or light coconut milk, stir until blended.

A LITTLE EXTRA SOMETHIN'

We dressed up this fragrant, flavorful soup with a sprinkling of roasted chopped pistachios and these seasoned crispy chickpeas:

1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil

1 can garbanzo beans (chickpeas), drained thoroughly and patted dry with paper towels

1/4 tsp. garam masala, plus salt and pepper

Heat oil in small skillet over low heat, swirl garbanzo beans until coated, then add salt and spices. Stir and swirl frequently until the beans look smaller and feel firmer. Remove them from heat and allow them to cool completely before serving.

These chickpeas are great on their own, by the way, as a healthy snack.