

Butternut Squash Soup with Orange Croutons

Makes 8 servings

1 medium butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cubed into 1-inch squares
1 medium zucchini squash, peeled and sliced into 1-inch pieces
1 yellow pepper, seeded and cut into strips
2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
3 celery stalks, chopped
1 onion, peeled and chopped
1 carrot, peeled and chopped
5 cups low-sodium vegetable stock
2 cups 100% Florida orange juice, divided
2 tablespoons chopped fresh sage
Salt and pepper to taste
2 cups prepared seasoned bread cubes for stuffing (not crumbled) or 8 crostini
Zest of 1 Florida orange

In a medium-sized roasting pan, place butternut squash, zucchini and yellow peppers. Drizzle 1 tablespoon olive oil over vegetables; toss to coat. Bake at 425⁰ F. uncovered for 40 minutes. Stir vegetables every 10 minutes to brown evenly on all sides; reserve.

Heat remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil in Dutch oven; add celery, onion and carrot; sauté for 3 to 5 minutes. Add vegetable broth, 1 cup orange juice, sage and reserved roasted vegetables. Bring to a boil; cover and simmer for 20 minutes. Let cool. Carefully purée small batches in blender. Return puréed mixture to Dutch oven and heat through.

Just before serving, prepare Orange Croutons. Spread seasoned bread cubes on small cookie sheet with 1-inch sides. Pour remaining 1 cup of orange juice onto cookie sheet and allow bread cubes to soak approximately 10 minutes; bread cubes should retain a slight crunch. (Do not use a bowl; croutons will end up mushy.) Drain remaining orange juice from bread cubes into puréed vegetable mixture and heat through. Place soup in bowls; top with Orange Croutons and garnish with orange zest. Serve immediately.

Note: Prepare orange croutons just before serving to maintain correct texture.