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STUFFED SUMMER SQUASH WITH BASIL & HONEY

SERVES 4 TO 6

The savory flavors of basil, honey, soy sauce, and sesame make this summer squash dish a delicious surprise.

2 pounds summer squash (4 to 6 medium squashes, such as zucchini, yellow, or pattypan)

Extra-virgin olive oil

1 small Walla Walla or other sweet onion, finely chopped

1 garlic clove, crushed

1 tablespoon honey

1 teaspoon light soy sauce

1 tablespoon tahini (sesame seed paste)

1/3 cup fresh basil, sliced into ribbons

1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds

1. Boil, steam, or microwave the squash whole until it is just barely tender but not falling apart. Drain (if needed) and cool. If necessary, slice the bottom of each squash so it can sit flat.

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Scoop a shallow hole in the top of each squash. Set the shells aside, and finely chop the scooped-out pieces.

2. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
3. In a small pan over medium heat, warm 1 tablespoon olive oil. When the oil shimmers, add the onion and garlic and sauté until they turn soft, about 2 minutes. Add the chopped squash, honey, soy sauce, tahini, and basil, and cook for 1 more minute.
4. Place the squash shells on a baking sheet. Spoon the squash-basil mixture into the shells, and sprinkle with sesame seeds.
5. Bake the squash for 10 minutes, or until heated through. Serve the individual squash on their own plates.

—*Recipe by Featherstone Farm, from Bounty from the Box: The CSA Farm Cookbook*

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ABOUT SUMMER SQUASH

The term “summer squash” refers to squashes like zucchini, pattypan or scallop, and yellow straightneck and crookneck (as opposed to thicker-skinned winter squashes). Summer varieties have thin skins and tender flesh.

For the most part, summer squashes share a similar flavor—a light, slightly sweet vegetable taste that is delicate and takes well to fresh herbs, butter, good-quality oils, and other light seasonings. Roasting or grilling concentrates the flavors in summer squash, evaporates some of their high water content, and renders the vegetables soft and creamy—much more appetizing than the product you get from steaming or boiling.

Summer squashes are surprisingly perishable; avoid washing them until just before using, and keep them wrapped in a plastic bag in the refrigerator vegetable crisper drawer for up to 4 days. Try to avoid bruising or puncturing the delicate skin, which will lead to decay.