

# **Green Hokkaido (Aka Kabocha) Squash Filled With Joy - And Aromatic Wheat Rice, Both Locally Produced By Oma Maa Food Co-op!**

## **Ingredients:**

Difficulty: Easy

(serves 1, multiply the measurements according to the portion you want to make)

1 green hokkaido (kabocha) squash  
1.5 dl (or 1/2 cup + 2 tbsp) wheat rice (in Finnish: vehnäriisi)\*, washed well  
1 l (or 4 cups) water, plus more if needed  
2 tbsp olive oil  
1 small onion, diced  
1 tbsp zante currants\*\*  
4 tbsp toasted and coarsely chopped walnuts  
salt and pepper, to taste  
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon

\*You can also use another grain, such as coarse bulgur, barley groats or wild rice. The water / grain proportion and cooking time will be different for each grain.

\*\*You can find this in oriental grocery shops, such as Alanya Market in Itäkeskus/Helsinki. If you can't find it, you can replace it with dried cranberries or even raisins.

## **Instructions:**

1. Preheat the oven to 200C.
2. Slice the top of the squash to use as a cap after stuffing. Using a spoon or your hand, remove the seeds and the filling bits and bobs. Do not try to remove the flesh of the squash, we will scoop it later, after it's roasted. Use a good quality knife to slice the top, it's quite hard (I used a serrated knife).
3. Put both the body and the cap of squash on an oven tray which is covered with a baking sheet. Cover the squash with aluminium foil and put in the medium part of your oven. Bake for 35 minutes with the foil, then remove the foil and bake for 10 to 15 minutes more, until a toothpick can be very easily inserted into the flesh of the squash.
4. In the meantime, boil the wheat rice (or any other grain that you are using). Put 1 litre water in room temperature in a pot and add the washed and drained wheat rice. Cook with the lid of the pot ajar, on medium heat, for about 20-25 minutes, until the grain is tender. Check the pot often as the water may spill over while cooking, and stir frequently to prevent it from sticking to the bottom of the pan. Also, if you see that your wheat rice has absorbed almost all the water but is still not really tender, add some more water and continue to cook. When it's tender and cooked, drain the grain if there is still water in the pot.
5. When the squash is ready, take out of the oven and let it cool for about 10 minutes so that you can handle it easily without burning your fingers. When it's cooled down, scoop the flesh using a spoon and put the flesh on a plate or bowl - it will be added to the filling. Mash the flesh a little with your spoon to make it easier to mix with the rest of the filling.

6. In a rice pan, put olive oil on medium high heat for half a minute, then add onion and saute for a few minutes, until the onion is translucent.

7. Add zante currants (or its substitute) and walnuts and continue to saute for a few more minutes, until the onion is fully cooked.

8. Add cooked grain and mix well.

9. Add salt and pepper to taste together with ground cinnamon, mix well. When you are sure that onion is well cooked, take it away from the heat.

10. Add the scooped flesh of the squash to the grain mixture.

11. Fill the squash with the grain mixture. While I was scooping the flesh out of the roasted squash, I accidentally dug a hole at the bottom of my squash. That's why I first transferred the empty squash onto the plate and put the filling afterwards. You don't need to do that if outer layer of your squash is intact. Fill the squash generously and then put the cap piece back on. Serve immediately. Enjoy!