

Sausage and Quinoa stuffed Acorn Squash with Chunks of Autumn

Preheat oven 400°F

1 medium acorn squash, halved and seeded
¾ cups quinoa
½ lb hot Italian sausage meat - *or meat removed from 4 links*
½ yellow onion, diced small
½ red bell pepper, seeded and diced small
¼ cup walnuts, chopped
1 clove of garlic, minced
10 fresh sage leaves, chopped
Extra virgin olive oil
1 tart apple, unpeeled, seeded and chopped
¼ cup dried sweetened cranberries
Freshly grated parmesan - *I use Reggiano Parmigiano*
Sea salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

THE STEPS:

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and drizzle with a bit of extra virgin olive oil.

Place the squash halves cut side down and roast for 25 minutes or until easily pierced with a fork.

Cook the quinoa according to the manufacturer's directions.

While the quinoa is cooking, place a heavily bottomed skillet over medium high heat.

Add a couple of tablespoons of olive oil.

When the olive oil is warm add onion, bell pepper, garlic, sage and walnuts - sauté slowly for 10 minutes.

Add sausage meat and continue cooking until all pinkness is gone from the meat.

Remove skillet from heat.

Gently fold in cooked quinoa, chopped apples and dried cranberries

Turn squash pieces over and fill with sausage/quinoa mixture.

Sprinkle with lots of freshly grated parmesan.

THE LOVE: If you'd like to make this dish vegan, just leave out the sausage! The "chunks of Autumn" give lots of flavour without the sausage...