

Butternut Bliss Soup

Serves 8 as a starter or 6 as a main

1 Tablespoon olive oil or grapeseed oil
1 clove garlic, minced
2 cups diced yellow onion
Natural salt and freshly ground black pepper
½ cup diced celery (about 2 ribs)
½ cup diced carrot
2 cups cubed orange flesh sweet potatoes
1 large butternut squash or pumpkin about 2.5 lbs, peeled, seeded and cut into 1 inch cubes
2 teaspoons minced ginger
8 cups vegetable broth
¼ teaspoon finely grated orange zest

In a large saucepan, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the garlic, onion and ¼ teaspoon each of salt and pepper. Sauté for 5 minutes, until the onion is soft and translucent. Add the celery and sauté for 5 minutes, then stir in the carrot, sweet potatoes, butternut squash and ginger. Add the vegetable broth and ¼ teaspoon of salt. Increase the heat to high and bring just to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium and simmer gently for 30 minutes, until the vegetables are completely tender. Remove the saucepan from the heat and stir in the orange zest.

Allow the soup to cool slightly, then pour into your blender in batches and puree on high for 1 to 2 minutes, until smooth and creamy. (Remember to remove the plastic cap in the blender top and cover the opening with a kitchen towel so steam and escape while you blend.) Return the soup to the saucepan and warm over low heat. Add maple syrup to taste and serve.