



Winter Squash, Stuffed & Roasted

serves 2-3, easily scaled up with a larger squash

- 1 medium whole roundish squash (kabocha, turban, acorn, hubbard) or heirloom pumpkin
- 2 large tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 shallots, peeled and diced
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 leek, white and light green parts, washed, trimmed and chopped
- 2 teaspoons toasted, ground fennel seeds
- 1 teaspoon pimentón
- 1/2 teaspoon red chile flakes
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 2 carrots, peeled and roughly diced
- 1 cup chopped fennel
- 1 cup diced zucchini
- 3/4 cup mozzarella or other melting cheese, shredded
- 4 tablespoons grated Parmesan

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Using a large, sharp knife, slice the top off the squash to create a "lid." With a big, sturdy spoon (or one with serrated edges), scoop out all the seeds and attached goop to make a clean cavity. (Reserve seeds to roast, if you like.) Then scoop out some of the inside flesh of the squash, leaving the walls about 3/4-inch thick. Dice this flesh and set aside.

Heat a large, heavy frying pan over medium heat and pour in the olive oil. When it's

hot, add the shallots, garlic and leek, and sautee until translucent and soft. Add fennel, pimentón, chile, salt and pepper and cook a minute or so before adding the remaining vegetables, including the reserved chopped squash. Sauté over moderate heat until tender, about 10-12 minutes. Remove vegetables from heat and stir in ham and cheeses.

Place the squash shell on a baking sheet lined with foil or parchment. Rub the inside with a little olive oil and sprinkle with salt. Then carefully pour or ladle vegetable mixture into the cavity. You can fill it all the way up. Set the lid on top and place in the oven. Bake for about 60-75 minutes, or until a metal skewer slides in easily through the side. You want the squash to retain its shape, so don't bake until it's so soft that it collapses (although it will still taste good if you accidentally do this).

To serve, slice the squash into wedges and top with filling.