

Butternut Squash Bites

Filling

2 tablespoons butter
6oz (1.5c) sliced leeks, white and light green part only
3 garlic cloves, sliced
1 tablespoon fresh thyme
14oz (3c) butternut squash, 1-inch cubes
½ cup chicken or vegetable broth
1 tablespoon maple syrup
2 teaspoons sherry vinegar
1.5oz (3T-ish) goat chevre

14oz sheet Frozen puff pastry *Dufour is the brand I always recommend
1 egg, whisked
6oz (6 pieces) bacon, cooked and crumbled
2 tablespoons chopped chives

Filling

1. Melt butter in a large saute pan over medium-low heat. Add sliced leeks and cook, stirring often until leeks are very soft and start to pick up some color. About 8 minutes. Add sliced garlic and continue to cook for another 1-2 minutes until the garlic is fragrant and soft.
2. Add cubed butternut squash, thyme, and broth. Season with salt and cover. Reduce the heat to low and cook covered for about 15 minutes. Give the pan a shake every 5 minutes. Remove the lid and poke a few pieces of squash to check for doneness. They should all be soft. If there is excess moisture in the pan, simmer uncovered for a few minutes until it is almost completely evaporated.
3. Add 1T maple syrup to the pan and stir, followed by 2t of sherry vinegar. Stir and cook for one minute.
4. Transfer everything in the pan to a blender and blend until smooth. Once smooth, add goat cheese and blend to incorporate. Taste the puree and season with salt and pepper. Transfer it to a bowl and cool.

*Butternut squash filling can be made a day in advance. Refrigerate after it has cooled.

Pastry

Transfer puff pastry from the freezer to the fridge to defrost 24 hours before assembling.

5. Dust a piece of parchment paper the size of a half sheet tray (18x13in) with flour. Unwrap puff pastry and lay it in the center. Dust the top of the pastry with flour and use a rolling pin to roll the pastry the size of the parchment paper. About two inches longer and wider. Slide the pastry and parchment onto a tray and chill in the fridge for 10 minutes.
6. Remove from the fridge and use a 2.75-inch circle cutter to cut 20 circles. Transfer the circles to a tray lined with a clean piece of parchment paper. Chill for another 10 minutes.

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7. Remove from the fridge. Take a smaller 2-inch circle cutter and center it in the middle of the pastry circles. Press the cutter about two-thirds of the way through the pastry being careful not to cut to the bottom. Repeat on all 20.
8. Use a fork and dock the centers multiple times. Use a pastry brush (or your finger) to brush the outer rim with egg wash.
9. Spoon a heaping teaspoon of filling into the center of each pastry. Use the back of your spoon, or an offset spatula, to fill the center circle. Chill for 10+ minutes.

Heat an oven to 400°

10. When ready to bake, transfer the bites directly from the fridge to the oven and bake for 18-20 minutes. They will puff significantly and the edges should be golden. Carefully, check the bottom of a pastry to see if the bottoms are evenly golden. If not bake for an additional minute or two.
11. Add crumbled bacon and chopped chives to the center. Serve hot right out of the oven.