

Front Burner



PHOTOS BY JULIA EWAN — THE WASHINGTON POST; TABLEWARE FROM CRATE AND BARREL

Braised Kabocha Squash and Chicken

4 servings

Feel like adding something different to your fall repertoire? Start with kabocha squash, which is in many markets right now. It takes a big knife, a firm hand and about 10 minutes to prep the solid orange flesh of this squat, green pumpkin, but its floury sweetness is worth it. Here, it's paired with ground chicken (ground turkey would work as well) and cooked in a sauce finished with a gluten-free potato starch slurry, which lends a silky thickness.

Serve with steamed rice or sauteed baby bok choy.

Chef Kaz Okochi of Kaz Sushi Bistro downtown provides a bit of insight into this dish in a new collection of multicultural family recipes, where the recipe appears. Adapted from "Kitchen Memories: A Legacy of Family Recipes From Around the World," by Anne Snape Parsons and Alexandra Greeley (Capital Books, 2007).

— Bonnie S. Benwick

INGREDIENTS

- 1 3-pound kabocha squash
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 8 ounces ground chicken
- 1 tablespoon minced ginger root
- 2½ cups plus 1½ tablespoons water
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon mirin
- 2½ tablespoons tamari or low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon potato starch or tapioca starch

DIRECTIONS

- Use a long, heavy knife to cut the squash into quarters. Discard the seeds and strings inside; peel each quarter and cut the flesh into ½-inch cubes. There should be about 4½ cups.
- Heat the oil in a large saute pan or skillet over medium-high heat until the oil shimmers. Add the chicken and ginger and cook for about 2 minutes, stirring to break up clumps, until no pink remains in the chicken. Add the squash and cook for 2 to 3 minutes, stirring once or twice, until it is well coated. Add 2½ cups of water and cook for 5 to 6 minutes; the squash should be submerged.
- Combine the sugar and mirin in a measuring cup, stirring to dissolve the sugar, and add to the pan. Cook for 2 minutes, then add the

tamari or soy sauce and cook for 8 to 10 minutes, until the liquid in the pan or skillet has reduced by half. The squash should be firm but tender and easily pierced with a fork.

- Meanwhile, combine the remaining 1½ tablespoons water with the potato starch or tapioca starch in a measuring cup and add to the pan. Cook for 30 seconds, stirring constantly; the sauce will thicken almost immediately and will take on a smooth sheen when it's done. Divide among individual bowls and serve hot.

NUTRITION | Per serving: 264 calories, 13 g protein, 36 g carbohydrates, 9 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 45 mg cholesterol, 688 mg sodium (434 mg if using low-sodium soy sauce), 7 g dietary fiber

Recipe tested by Bonnie S. Benwick; e-mail questions to food@washpost.com.

