

11/17/09 - Stuffed Miniature Pumpkins

I was wondering what to do with all those cute little pumpkins



I had left over from Halloween, when I remembered that years ago, my friend Frieda had this idea to stuff miniature pumpkins for one of our PTA fundraiser cooking classes. This dish makes such a beautiful presentation and I thought this updated combination of rice with mushrooms tasted great. There are endless variations, using different kinds of rice, vegetables, nuts, herbs, or dried fruit. I prefer to use those little round pumpkins rather than the flatter ones, since they have a larger cavity to stuff.

6 miniature pumpkins

1/2 cup water

¼ cup maple syrup

Stuffing:

2 tablespoons of olive oil

1/2 medium brown onion, chopped small

10 mushrooms, cleaned and sliced

2 teaspoons sea salt

Fresh cracked pepper to taste

1/2 cup Turkish Baldo rice

1/2 cup Red Wehani rice

2 cups of water

1 cup toasted pecans, chopped (optional)

½ cup dried apricots, chopped

Wash the pumpkins, cut off the tops and save them. Clean the insides of any seeds or fibers. Place the pumpkins in a casserole dish filled with about a quarter inch of water and cover tightly with heavy duty foil. Bake them in a preheated 350° oven until partially cooked, about 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and set aside.





Meanwhile prepare the filling. Place a couple tablespoons of olive oil in a preheated sauté pan and add the onions and mushrooms. Sauté the mushrooms until you see some caramelization, season with salt and pepper, then add the Wehani rice and stir. Sauté the rice mix for a moment, then add 1 cup of water and cover. As soon as the water boils, turn the heat down and steam the Red Wehani for about 15 minutes. Next, add the Turkish Baldo rice, stir to mix and then add 1 additional cup of water. As soon as the rice reaches a boil again, turn the heat down and cover the pan. Steam on low heat until all the water evaporates or about another 20 minutes. Wehani rice takes longer to cook than Baldo rice.

Paint the inside of each pumpkin with maple syrup using a pastry brush. Fluff the rice, add the dried apricots, and toasted pecans. Spoon the rice into each pumpkin to fill. Place lids on pumpkins and place pumpkins back in the roasting pan. Any excess rice can be spooned around the pumpkins directly into the roasting dish. Cover the pan with foil once again. Bake in a 350° oven for another 30 minutes, then uncover and bake for 10 more minutes until pumpkins are fully cooked.

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