



Spaghetti Squash



with Bacon, Spinach, and goat Cheese

After three years of attempting to grow spaghetti squash, I've finally succeeded. Previous years' plantings yielded flowers and nothing else. I didn't know it at the time, but these plants didn't grow very big. This year the squash practically took over the garden. In an attempt to channel it, I directed some of the runners into the trees, where they happily took off. The first squash I had my eye on for harvesting was completely devoured by some hungry critter. I snagged the second a few days later, as it appeared ready and was still intact.

I never cooked or even ate spaghetti squash, so I had no recipes or preparation skills. I therefore turned to the trusty internet. I am reposting the recipe I found here, as I doubt I will find one so tasty! I have made a few changes, as noted.

1. Christine's recipe says to cut the squash into rings and bake. I preferred to cut the squash in half (width-wise), clean out the seeds and bake cut side down for 30 minutes on a cookie sheet with a bit of water in it. I then used a fork to twirl out the strands as per YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4xKRiF8Fkwk> .

Here is the rest of Christine's recipe per https://www.buzzfeed.com/christinebyrne/spaghetti-squash-with-bacon-spinach-and-goat-cheese?utm_term=.aqolwz44J#.udW3ygee1.

Spaghetti Squash With Bacon, Spinach, and Goat Cheese
Serves 2

Recipe by Christine Byrne, BuzzFeed Staff

INGREDIENTS

1 medium spaghetti squash

1 tablespoon olive oil

Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper (note: I added no salt - bacon and cheese were plenty!)

6 slices bacon, cut into 1-inch pieces

1 tablespoon red wine vinegar

1 tablespoon maple syrup

1 5-ounce bag baby spinach (note: after making this recipe, I felt 10 oz of spinach might be better)

2 ounces soft goat cheese, crumbled (note: I bought 4 oz of goat cheese and used it all!)

* PREPARATION (note: for steps 1 and 2 I used <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4xKRiF8Fkwk> for preparation, and used no salt)

* 1. Preheat the oven to 400°F and line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.

* 2. Cut about half an inch off of the top and bottom of the spaghetti squash, and discard those pieces. Cut the squash crosswise into rings about 1 inch thick, and run your knife around the inside of the rings to cut the seeds out. Drizzle the olive oil over the baking sheet, then spread the squash rings over it, moving them around a little so that the undersides are evenly coated with a little bit of oil. Season with salt and pepper, then flip the rings over and season again.

3. Roast in the preheated oven until the squash is tender, about 30 minutes. When the squash is done, set it aside on the counter while you cook the bacon and spinach. It'll be easier to handle if you let it cool for 10 minutes before taking it apart.

4. Heat a large skillet over medium heat, then add the bacon slices. Cook over medium heat, stirring often, just until the very edges of the bacon start to brown slightly, about 2 minutes. Turn the heat down to low and continue to cook until the bacon is crispy and the fat has rendered out, about 5 more minutes.

5. When the bacon is done, (I drained almost all of the bacon grease) turn the heat up to medium and add the red wine vinegar while stirring and scraping the bottom of the skillet. This will deglaze your pan, so that all of the caramelized bits of bacon end up in your food and not stuck to the bottom of your pan. After about

20 seconds, turn the heat back down to low and add the maple syrup. Stir everything together just to combine, then add the spinach, one handful at a time, stirring after every addition so that the spinach wilts and there's room in your skillet for more. When all of the spinach is wilted, turn the burner off under the skillet and let everything sit in there while you finish the squash.

* 6. Peel the skin away from the squash, then use a fork or your hands to pull the strands apart, adding them to the skillet as you go. When all of the squash is in the skillet, add the goat cheese and toss everything together just to combine. (note: the previously mentioned YouTube video shows an easy method for extracting the squash from the skin)

7. Divide between two plates and serve immediately.

(I love my 15" cast iron pan!)

I put the finished squash in one bowl and the spinach / bacon in another, and held back on the cheese. I proceeded to cook the rest of the meal. When everything else was done, I dumped the squash and spinach / bacon back in the pan and cooked at high heat while mixing for only a short time until it was hot. I then added the cheese, turned the heat off, and let the cheese partially melt. Ready to serve!

Thank you Christine Byrne for this delicious recipe!

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