

ORZO WITH ROASTED BUTTERNUT SQUASH, PEAS AND PARMESAN

Cooking time: 30 minutes



- 1 medium (1-1/2 pounds) butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into 1-inch pieces
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1-1/2 teaspoons coarse salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$ pound orzo (or any small pasta such as ditalini)
- 1-1/2 cups frozen baby peas
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 8 basil leaves, torn into pieces

* Peeling the squash can be a challenge if your peeler is dull. To make the process easier, microwave the whole squash on high for 2 minutes. This will soften the squash slightly and make it a cinch to peel and cut up.

Preheat oven to 400°. Put the squash on a roasting pan. Drizzle with the olive oil, garlic, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt, and pepper. Toss to coat thoroughly. Spread into one layer and roast 30 minutes.

While the squash is cooking, bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add a teaspoon of coarse salt (add less salt if desired) and the orzo. Stir and return to a boil. Stir again and cook until al dente, about 7 to 9 minutes.

Stir the peas into the pot and then drain the pasta and peas. Reserve $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the pasta water. Return them to the cooking pot, add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the reserved pasta water, the squash, and half the Parmesan, and stir until well combined. If the mixture seems a little stiff, stir in some more of the pasta water. Divide between serving plates; top with the remaining Parmesan and the basil leaves. Serve hot.