



Root Veggie Nut Roast with roasted tomato sauce

This veggie nut roast is as beautiful as it is delicious, so next time someone tells you that vegetarian food is boring, bring out this dish and show them just how wrong they are!

Ingredients

olive oil
100g quinoa
500g butternut squash
2 onions
2 sticks of celery
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2 sprigs of fresh rosemary
1 tsp sweet smoked paprika
1 tsp dried oregano
2 large field mushrooms
1 lemon
60g panko bread crumbs
120g dried apricots
150g mixed unsalted nuts
4 large eggs
40g mature Cheddar cheese

For the roasted tomato sauce:

3 fresh red chillies
1 stick of cinnamon
2 cloves of garlic
½ a bunch fresh thyme (15g)
2 large peeled roasted red peppers
2 x 400g can of plum tomatoes
1 tbsp balsamic vinegar

Instructions

Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas 4. Take parchment paper and use it to line all sides of an oiled 1.5 litre loaf tin, leaving a bit of overhang at the ends to help you lift out your nut roast later.

Cook the quinoa according to the packet instructions, drain, tip into a mixing bowl and leave to cool. Meanwhile, wash and deseed the squash, peel the onions, trim the celery and chop it all into 2cm chunks. Place in a large roasting tray, crumble in the chestnuts, strip in the rosemary, add the paprika, oregano, a pinch of sea salt and black pepper, and 2 tablespoons of oil, then toss well. Roast for 40 minutes, roughly chopping the mushrooms and adding for the last 10 minutes.

Remove the tray from the oven and tip everything into the quinoa bowl. Finely grate in half the lemon zest, add the breadcrumbs, then chop and add the apricots and nuts. Crack in the eggs and mixwell, then transfer to the lined loaf tin, piling it up high. Roast for 45 minutes, or until golden and gnarly.

With 30 minutes to go, make the sauce. On the hob, heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a roasting tray on a medium heat. Leaving them joined at the stalk, halve the chillies lengthways, then add to the tray with the cinnamon for 5 minutes, stirring regularly. Meanwhile, peel and slice the garlic. Scoop the chillies and cinnamon out of the tray and put aside, then add the garlic, strip in most of the thyme leaves and cook for 5 minutes. Drain, chop and add the peppers, pour in the tinned tomatoes and 1 tin's worth of water, breaking up the tomatoes with a wooden spoon, then add the balsamic and a pinch of salt. Bring to the boil, then simmer for 20 minutes, or until thickened and reduced, stirring occasionally.

Lift the nut roast out of its tin and sit it in the sauce, discarding the paper. Grate over the cheese, pop a chilli on top with the remaining thyme sprigs and drizzle with a little oil. Return the other chillies and cinnamon to the sauce. Roast for a final 15 minutes, then leave to sit for 5 minutes. Finely chop and stir as much of the chilli as you like into the sauce, slice up the nut roast and tuck in.