



Butternut and cannellini gratin

This is a favorite warming winter or autumn dinner. It's crispy-topped, with a sweet butternut, lemon, and herb filling. It's super easy to put together and is made from simple stuff that I usually have on hand.

Try experimenting with other squashes if you find them in the greengrocer's, as they all cook in roughly the same amount of time. Mixing a few different colors and shapes can be really pretty and make it more interesting to eat.

If you are vegan, or if you just fancy changing this up, you can add a handful of chopped almonds in place of the cheese; it's not the same, but it's just as good.

Preheat your oven to 425°F/220°C (convection 400°F/200°C) and get all your ingredients and equipment together.

SERVES 6

3 red onions
olive oil
2 pounds/1 kilo butternut or other orange-fleshed squash
a few sprigs of rosemary
2 (14-ounce/400-g) cans of cannellini beans, or 2¾ cups/500 g home-cooked beans (see pages 241–245)
sea salt and freshly ground pepper
1 lemon
1¼ cups/300 ml hot vegetable stock
3 thick slices of good sourdough or whole wheat bread
5 ounces/150 g Gruyère cheese

Coarsely slice the onions. Put a wide, shallow, ovenproof casserole pan over medium heat, add a good glug of olive oil, and fry the onions until soft and sweet.

Cut the squash into large dice, discarding the seeds (there is no need to peel), then add to the softened onions with the leaves from the rosemary sprigs and continue cooking until the squash has colored a little at the edges and is starting to soften; this will take about 10 minutes.

Take off the heat and add the drained cannellini beans, then season with salt and pepper and squeeze the juice of the lemon over.

Pour the stock over, then tear the bread over the top. Grate the Gruyère over or sprinkle over the chopped almonds, if you like. Bake for 35 to 45 minutes, until the cheese has melted and the stock is bubbling around the edges.

