

Brown Buttered Squash, Dates and Walnuts

Serves 6–8

These squash have EVERYTHING: sweetness, saltiness, crunchiness, chewiness. They're saucy and tender and if you choose wisely: you don't have to peel the squash. Even if you're not that into sweet foods/vegetables on the table (I'm not!), trust that these will be a welcome reprieve from the rest of the savoriness.

2 pounds squash, such as honeynut, butternut, kabocha or acorn, quartered, seeds removed if you like, unpeeled

6 tablespoons olive oil, divided

Kosher salt, freshly ground black pepper

6 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 cup / 4 ounces walnut halves or pieces, pecans, hazelnuts or almonds, coarsely chopped

4 ounces dates, about 9, pitted and torn in half

2 tablespoons thyme, marjoram or oregano leaves

Flaky sea salt

1. Preheat oven to 425°. Place squash on a rimmed baking sheet and drizzle with 4 tablespoons olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Make sure all the squash is cut-side down and roast, without turning, until completely tender and deeply caramelized on the underside (squash will never quite look caramelized on top, only where it meets the sheet tray. To check for doneness, the skin of the squash should look like a slightly deflated balloon, but you can also use a spatula to peek on the cut-side to check it for browning), 45–50 minutes (the squash can be roasted ahead, if you want to reheat in the oven closer to serving, pop into a 425° oven for 10–15 minutes).

2. Meanwhile, melt butter in a small pot or skillet over medium heat. Once it starts to foam but before it's brown, add the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil and walnuts. The nuts will foam up and disappear into the butter-- don't forget about them.

3. Swirl the pot, stirring constantly and continue to cook the walnuts in the browning butter. Eventually, the walnuts will toast and the butter will brown, 4–6 minutes. Remove from heat, add the dates and season with salt and pepper; remove from heat (this walnut/date mixture can be done ahead, just rewarm gently over medium heat before serving).

4. To serve, transfer squash to a large serving platter or shallow bowl. Spoon walnut/date mixture over and scatter with thyme, flay salt and another good grind of black pepper.

DO AHEAD: Brown butter/walnut/date mixture can be made hours in advance; rewarm gently before serving. Squash can be roasted a few hours in advance, rewarm (they are good room-temp, but great when warm).

LEFTOVERS: I don't love how the butter solidifies when chilled, but even still, I would absolutely cut this squash up and eat it in a salad the next day. Be your own Sweetgreen! Or re-warm and eat with your leftover turkey.