

Roast squash, red pepper, Puy lentil and Feta salad

This is a lovely way to use butternut or other sweet orange autumn squashes. You could omit the red peppers if you like, and use soft, tangy goat's cheese instead of the Feta. To spice it up further, roast the squash with a sprinkling of ground cumin, coriander and nutmeg.



Serves: 6 as a side dish or 4 for lunch

1 small butternut squash (half one if it is huge)

2 red bell peppers

1 red onion

olive oil

chilli flakes

250g Puy lentils

2 garlic cloves

1 bay leaf

3 tbsps balsamic vinegar

100-150g Feta cheese

a small bunch of flat leaf parsley or 50g rocket

1. Preheat the oven to 200C. Peel and deseed the squash and cut into chunks no bigger than 2cm wide. Halve and deseed the peppers and cut into 2cm strips. Halve, peel and slice the red onion. Toss vegetables together in a roasting tin with just enough olive oil to coat and season with salt, pepper and chilli flakes. Roast for about 40 minutes, stirring them around half-way through, until cooked through and caramelised in places. Take care that the red pepper does not burn – tuck it under if needed.
2. Meanwhile place the lentils in a small saucepan with one peeled clove of garlic, the bay leaf, a lug of olive oil and enough cold water to cover by 2cm. Bring to a boil, cover and simmer gently for about 20 minutes or until tender but still holding their shape, adding a generous pinch of salt half way through cooking. You may need to top up the water so that the lentils remain submerged. Drain in a sieve.
3. Make a vinaigrette by whisking together 3 tbsps balsamic vinegar with 7 tbsps olive oil, some salt and pepper and one thoroughly crushed garlic clove. Also, pick the leaves off the parsley and crumble the Feta into chunky pieces.
4. When everything is ready assemble the salad on a platter by building up layers of braised lentils, roasted vegetables, crumbled Feta, parsley or rocket leaves and generous drizzles of balsamic dressing.
5. Serve warm or at room temperature.