

## Butternut Squash Soup with Pumpkin Seed Oil

*Serves 6 as an appetizer, 12 as an amuse-bouche (Yields 10 cups/2.5 L)*



This soup is very simple to make. Use unblemished squash that are heavy for their size, and if butternut squash are not available, try pumpkin. I grow winter squash in my garden and use it year-round: we fry the blossoms in the summer, then make soups with the flesh in the winter. Pumpkin seed oil is available at fine grocery stores; use hazelnut oil instead if you need to.

**IN A LARGE** saucepan fitted with a lid, heat the butter on medium heat. Add the shallots and sauté until lightly coloured, about 5 minutes. Add the squash and lightly season with salt and white pepper. Reduce the heat to low, cover and cook for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the squash is very soft.

Heat the chicken (or vegetable) stock in a medium pot on medium heat. Once the squash is very soft, pour enough hot stock over the squash to cover it by about 1 inch/2.5 cm. Simmer the squash mixture for 5 minutes, then add the Parmesan cheese and the nutmeg and cook for 2 minutes more. Remove the soup from the heat, transfer to a blender and pureé until smooth or use a handheld blender. Strain the soup through a fine-mesh sieve into a clean bowl and discard any solids. Stir in the cream and season with more salt, if necessary.

**TO SERVE** Pour the soup into 16 small espresso cups or ladle it into 6 bowls. Drizzle each serving with pumpkin seed oil, and top with pumpkin seeds and chives.

**WINE** Some of B.C.'s fine Pinot Blanc or a Mâconnais Chardonnay would complement this soup.

½ cup	unsalted butter	120 mL
2	shallots, sliced	2
5 lbs	butternut squash (about 2 small), peeled, seeded and thinly sliced	2.25 kg
7 cups	chicken or vegetable stock (pages 235, 233)	1.75 L
½ cup	grated Parmesan cheese	120 mL
½ tsp	freshly grated nutmeg	2.5 mL
¼ cup	whipping cream	60 mL
3 Tbsp	pumpkin seed oil	45 mL
2 Tbsp	toasted pumpkin seeds	30 mL
1 Tbsp	chopped chives	15 mL