

Italian Sausage and Butternut Squash Soup

by Dorothy Zehnder

Son-in-law Jerry chose this as one of his favorite recipes by Dorothy: "There have been more great meals with Dorothy than I can possibly recall, but one memory stands out. Around Christmas this soup is delicious with sandwiches at family get-togethers."

1 Tablespoon canola oil
16 ounces Italian sausage
1 red or yellow onion, chopped
1 red bell pepper, seeded and chopped
2 Tablespoons garlic, finely diced
1-2 large Butternut squash, sliced, peeled and seeded; then cut into 1-inch cubes (4 pounds diced – or you can use another winter squash such as Acorn)
1 15-ounce can whole kernel corn, drained and rinsed, divided
2½ cups water
1 Tablespoon chicken bouillon
2 15-ounce cans diced tomatoes or home canned stewed tomatoes
2 15-ounce cans Northern beans, drained and rinsed
Salt and pepper to taste
Garnish: fresh, chopped parsley if desired

In a large 8-quart stockpot, heat 1 tablespoon oil. Add Italian sausage; brown and remove from pan, leaving the grease to sauté onions. Transfer to sausage to a dish lined with paper towel to drain. In stockpot, add onion and sauté until translucent. Add bell pepper and garlic; sauté and stir for a couple of minutes. Add diced squash to pan, ½ can of corn, water and chicken base. Cover and cook until squash is tender, about 20-25 minutes.

In batches in food processor blender, puree the soup. Return to stockpot and add tomatoes, the remaining corn, Northern beans and Italian sausage. Add salt and pepper to taste and simmer over low heat 15-20 minutes to blend flavors, stirring occasionally. Garnish with fresh parsley when serving if desired.

Note: If soup is too thick, add some milk or additional chicken stock to thin it. This is a hearty, thick soup, so don't thin too much.