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## Patching Up the Pumpkin


RECENT HALLOWEEN FUN AND ITS UBIQUITOUS ORANGE SQUASH INSPIRES AN EASY FALL RECIPE

ON THE DAY AFTER HALLOWEEN (when I knew I would have no trick-or-treaters, but nevertheless bought several bags of candy that I like), I was munching on my supply of mini-chocolates and peering at the jack-o-lantern my friends and I had carved earlier that week. I noticed that the wide grin we had given this bright orange pumpkin was now turning into a grimace. Her cheery visage was starting to look a little forlorn. Once carved, these bright orbs don't last too long outside. I figured I'd dispose of it later.

It was one of the last days of the farmer's market. I gathered up my many candy wrappers and headed out with my cart. Tomatoes and peaches had given way to Brussels sprouts, broccoli, and squashes of so many varieties. Rummaging through the piles, I had chosen two—a Hubbard

and a Kabocha. Heading to the cashier, I thought, wait a minute. Wait. A. Minute. I already had winter squash, my pumpkin. I kept the Kabocha just in case my grinning specimen was past her prime.

Unless you happen to have a machete in your kitchen, cutting a hard squash can be a little daunting. I remembered reading a tip that said to make a few slits in the squash, then place it in the microwave for 3-4 minutes. Voila! I was able to cut the squash with my sharpest knife.

There's no need to peel squash before cooking this recipe. Just scrape out the seeds, which you can rinse, dry, and roast with a little olive oil and salt, if you want. A savory snack to go with your candy bounty. The pumpkin or squash provides double pleasures: beauty in your landscape, and a healthy, delicious vegetable on your table. No tricks. Just treats. 

### Caramelized Squash with Pecans



#### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 winter squash, such as pumpkin, kabocha or butternut (about 2-3 pounds)
- ¼ cup olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- ¼ cup maple syrup or honey, plus more for drizzling
- 1 teaspoon hot or sweet smoked paprika
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- Freshly ground pepper
- 1 tablespoon butter
- ½ cup coarsely chopped pecans (or walnuts or pistachios)
- Flaky sea salt
- 1 small lemon

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat oven to 425 degrees. Cut the squash lengthwise into 2-inch wedges, scraping off any seeds. Place the squash on a rimmed baking sheet. Combine the olive oil, maple syrup or honey, paprika, cumin, salt, and pepper in a small bowl. Coat the squash wedges with the olive oil mixture and roast, turning once, until the wedges are beautifully browned and tender, about 35-45 minutes.
2. While the squash roasts, melt the butter in a small skillet until golden. Add the chopped nuts and cook, stirring frequently, until the nuts are toasted and fragrant. Remove from heat.
3. Place the roasted squash on a serving platter and drizzle with a little olive oil and syrup, if desired. Sprinkle with nuts, flaky salt, and several grinds of pepper. Zest a lemon over the top and serve. Serves 6.



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*KATHY HARRISON is a Barrington Hills resident who teaches the fine art of cooking. For more information, call 847-381-4828.*

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