

# Pretend it's Fall



Ann Arbor Fall 2010

It's 9AM and already 80 degrees outside on this sunny yet windy day in late October in Miami. When we moved here from Ann Arbor, Michigan, the hubbs and I were excited to be done with 8 – 9 months of winter. The bitter cold and unending days of no sunshine were taking it's toll on our otherwise sunny dispositions and we were excited to be living in a climate where it was sunny most every day of the year. However, we knew we were sacrificing Spring and Fall when we moved to Miami. The seasons here most closely resemble Summer and Even Hotter Than Summer. Case in point, it's late October and 80 degrees at 9AM. You know how you know Fall is around the corner when Starbucks brings the Pumpkin Spice Latte back into rotation? It's like, "Great, just what I want when it's 85 degrees outside—a cup of sugary hot milk. Hmmm, can I get that over ice please?" (Besides Fall and Spring, Miami is also in need of some local coffee houses; at least in North Miami Beach. We have driven the 30 minutes to Panther Coffee just for a cup of real delicious coffee. Hey, you gotta do what you gotta do). Anywho, I digress. I miss Fall and when you miss the yumminess of Fall and you like to cook the quickest way of

recreating the glory of Fall is in your kitchen. So while the sweaters and scarves on display at the mall remain strictly a display (though the students at the school I work at do in fact break out their Uggs when the thermometer dips down to 70), root vegetables, apples and butternut squash do not. If you read the Caramel Coffee Cake post you'll remember that my big post-baby hosting took place on Simchat Torah. We had a hankerin' for some butternut squash so purchased the largest, most obscene squash we could find. After roasting half of it with some maple syrup and pecans, I used the rest of it for a quick flatbread dinner last week. So all you warm climate folks, throw caution to the wind, dip that AC down to 70, break out your fleece (who am I kidding? I haven't bought fleece since 2002. Even the coldest of weather can't force me into fleece) from storage and turn on the oven because if you can't have Fall outside you can at least create it in the kitchen.



Butternut Squash

# Roasted Butternut Squash and Caramelized Onion Flatbread

## What?

### Roasted Butternut Squash

- 1 large butternut squash, cut into 1-inch chunks
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- salt + pepper to taste

### Caramelized Onions

- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 large purple onions, halved & thinly sliced
- salt + pepper to taste

### Additional Flatbread Ingredients

- 1 prepared pizza crust (I like Udi's and it's kosher!)
- Desired amount of shredded sharp cheddar
- 2 tsp. olive oil
- 2 tbsp. sage leaves, cut into ribbons and sauteed prior to assembling
- 2 tbsp. chopped toasted walnuts (optional)
- Dash of nutmeg

## How?

### Roasted Butternut Squash

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place cubed squash evenly on rimmed baking sheets; drizzle with 1 tablespoon of olive oil, sprinkle with salt and pepper and toss to coat. Bake for 45-50 minutes or until tender.

### Caramelized Onions

1. Heat oil in a large skillet over low heat. Add onions and a pinch of salt. Cook until completely

caramelized, stirring occasionally at first and more often as onions begin to brown. Depending on your stove, this could take anywhere from 30 minutes to over an hour. Season with freshly ground pepper.

## Flatbread

1. Preheat oven to temperature indicated on pizza crust package. Top crust with caramelized onions, cheese, and squash. Bake for time on package or until squash is heated through and cheese has melted.
2. While pizza is baking, heat oil in small skillet over medium high heat. Add sage leaves and saute, stirring constantly, for about 3 minutes or until leaves are crispy, but still green. Sprinkle sage leaves and walnuts on pizza before serving.

\*\*Pair with salad of arugula, blue cheese (let me know if you find kosher blue cheese that's cheaper than \$7) and toasted walnuts

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## I ain't scared



I am not a brave person. Need an example? For the longest time I was afraid of thunderstorms. Not just afraid. Petrified. I'd burst into tears when hearing thunder and run around unplugging things like a crazy old lady. I'm not sure why I would unplug things or what that had to do with my

personal safety...but whatever.

Maybe my behavior had something to do with the fact that my childhood babysitter would make us huddle in the bathroom and prepare for a tornado any time it rained. I know. Crazy, right? Believe it or not I slowly learned that rain clouds and even the occasional thunderstorm are not to be feared. My point is that fear is a learned behavior. One of my favorite places to push the boundaries of anxiety is in the kitchen. Surely if I can stop crying when I hear the thunder roll, I can be fearless and do things like make up a soup recipe. Right?

Last week while exploring the World Wide Web (I think I'm funny) I came across something called pumpkin chowder. I was like...what? Canned pumpkin can be a part of something that doesn't involve a pie or some sort of decorating contest? As I was reading the ingredients list I became annoyed. Things like cooking sherry, fennel and chopped peppers were listed. Now, I know that I don't have a precious little baby like my friend Whitney, but my time cannot be spent chopping peppers and looking for cooking sherry at the grocery store. I've got a whole mess of New York Housewives episodes to catch up with on the DVR. My cooking these days involves being as quick and easy as possible. So I reviewed the list of ingredients. Decided that what I was looking at resembled a vegetable stew (with canned pumpkin) and decided to be brave and figure it out in the store.

So the question is...what can you challenge yourself to make without a recipe? How can you have your own version of Iron Chef at home? Please know that I understand that making up a soup recipe is a lot different than making up some crazy souffle or coming up with a new way to roast a chicken. Baby steps, y'all. Baby. Steps. I apologize for not taking pictures of my delicious stew, but I was scared it might be ugly with the addition of pumpkin. By the time I realized it was gonna be alright it was too late. Just trust me. It's

deliciously fall-tastic.

Here's what I did. You can add or leave out whatever you want. F'real y'all. It's not rocket science, especially with a bunch of vegetables.

1 onion (chopped)

1 bag of frozen mixed veggies (carrots, green beans etc...)

2 cans of black beans

1 can of kidney beans

1 can of Rotel Original (google it)

2 small cans of diced green chillies

2 cans sliced stewed tomatoes

1 can vegetable stock

1 can pureed pumpkin

2 teaspoons of ground cumin

salt and pepper to taste.

Fry that chopped onion. Girl, you know that nothing in the kitchen should star without a fried onion. Once the onion has softened add your cumin. I like to let the onions simmer in the cumin for a bit, it gives them a nice flavor. Begin to haphazardly add the other ingredients as you will. You want to stir them in as you go. Save the vegetable stock for last. The pumpkin. I know. It's weird. Scoop it out of that can and stir it in. It basically dissolves into your soup. It'll add a slight earthy flavor to your soup and give you a lot of extra fiber. You know fiber is good, so just put it in there! Once you've added all of the other ingredients toss in the veggie stock, stir everything around a bit and bring to a boil. Once you're bubbling up for a minute or two

bring the temperature down to low and let your soup simmer for about 30 minutes or so. You're ready to eat.

I love making soup. I can't lie. I mostly like making soup because its one pot and you throw a bunch of things in and hope for the best. I'm going to dig around a bit and see if I can't find a better way to eat canned pumpkin. Now, I know I could get crazy and cook an actual pumpkin, but I don't think I have the energy or the counter space for that. There must be a delicious pumpkin soup out there. There must be. I'm gonna find it, y'all. I promise.

xo

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## **Annnnnnnnnnnnd we're back (we hope) .**

Well, it's been a while, to say the least. It would appear that our last blog post was almost a year ago. Ugh. So here's what happened (at least with one of us. I'll let Jeremy explain himself ☐

So I got pregnant. My husband and I had our first child in August and around the time of the last blog post is when I started the ever so ladylike first trimester symptom of nauseous and vomiting. Yum, right? It go so bad that I stopped eating cheese! CHEESE PEOPLE! I LOVE CHEESE! There was one week in the first trimester that I only ate peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Then there was that one time that my hubby made himself a veggie burger and the sheer smell of it

made me, well, yeah. And then the second trimester hit and out went the nausea and in came the intense cravings. There was that one time I wanted turkey and stuffing dinner so so badly that I ended up in tears because Boston Market isn't kosher. But now, almost a year later, in place of intense cravings and puking and rallying is the most beautiful baby in the world (no, seriously). Ever since the little one was born, I've spent an insane amount on my iPhone, especially during the first several weeks of her life. When a newborn wants to eat every 2 to 3 hours around the clock and it's 3 am, you need to do something to keep yourself awake and for me, that was perusing apps like Pinterest and Punchfork. And now that babe is finally on a bit of a schedule and the glory of nap time has entered my life (as well as the glory of an Ergo. Oh sweet, sweet Ergo), I'm able to cook again. Cooking is such a great creative outlet for me. And I didn't realize it until it wasn't there anymore, but so was this blog. And though my family is my whole world, a woman needs something for herself, well, at least this woman does. so back to the blog we go. This past Simchat Torah we hosted family and friends for lunch and it was wonderful having people around the table enjoying my food again. Now, don't get it twisted, the time to actually sit down and write is limited but I'm gonna try my best to get back to it (and Jeremy promises to do the same. He told me so himself!) We know there are a bajillion food blogs out there so we're grateful you're back reading ours.



Tiny One



Ok, so Simcaht Torah lunch was a dairy sensation. We don't usually go dairy on holidays but I spent the shabbat before reading the Southern Living my sister-in-law left after the family visited and my goodness, there was this recipe for caramel coffee cake that made my mouth water. Now being Southern myself, I couldn't believe it took me 32 years to actually read my first Southern Living and it was revelatory. Sure, 85% of the recipes in it call for bacon but I find it only a challenge I wish to take on rather than a big stop sign. And sure, 100% of the recipes in the magazine could clog your arteries just by looking at them but again, challenge to make healthier, not stop sign. And Lord knows I need things to be healthier now that I got some baby weight to lose. But I digress, let's get back to the coffee cake. Did I mention caramel sauce? Also, did you know caramel sauce take 10 seconds to make? Dangerous. The men around the table asked for seconds so I'm gonna assume that the cake tasted good but, why don't you give it a try and let me know ☐



Crumbs



Mess

### Cake Ingredients:

2 Tbsp butter  
1/2 cup butter, softened  
1 cup sugar  
2 large eggs  
2 cups all-purpose flour  
2 tsp baking powder  
1/2 tsp salt  
2/3 cup milk  
2 tsp vanilla

### Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Melt 2 Tbsp. butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat; add apples; sauté 5 minutes or until softened. Remove from heat; cool completely (about 30 minutes).
2. Meanwhile, prepare Streusel Topping and Caramel Sauce. Reserve 1/2 cup Caramel Sauce for another use.
3. Beat butter at medium speed with an electric mixer until creamy; gradually add sugar, beating well. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating until blended after each addition.
4. Combine flour, baking powder, and salt; add to butter

mixture alternately with milk, beginning and ending with flour mixture. Beat at low speed until blended after each addition. Stir in vanilla. Pour batter into a greased and floured shiny 9-inch springform pan; top with apples. Drizzle with 1/2 cup Caramel Sauce; sprinkle with Streusel Topping.

5. Bake at 350° for 45 minutes. Cover loosely with aluminum foil to prevent excessive browning; bake 25 to 30 minutes or until center is set. (A wooden pick will not come out clean.) Cool in pan on a wire rack 30 minutes; remove sides of pan. Cool completely on wire rack (about 1 1/2 hours). Drizzle with 1/2 cup Caramel Sauce.

### **Caramel Sauce**

Bring 1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar, 1/2 cup butter, 1/4 cup whipping cream (I used half & half), and 1/4 cup honey to a boil in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, stirring constantly; boil, stirring frequently, 2 minutes. Remove from heat, and cool 15 minutes before serving.

### **Streussel Topping**

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 1/2 cup butter, melted
- 1/2 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

### **Preparation**

1. Stir together flour, pecans, melted butter, brown sugar, granulated sugar, cinnamon, and salt until blended. Let stand 30 minutes or until firm enough to crumble into small pieces.

