

Three Sisters Stew

6 servings

1 Large butternut, squash

1 Tbsp oil

1 medium onions

¼ bulb garlic

1 medium pepper

1 – 28oz cans diced tomatoes

2 cups kidney beans (1-15oz cans)

2 cups corn kernels

1 cup vegetable stock/water

1 small fresh hot chili or just can chillies

2 tsp cumin

1 tsp dried oregano

Salt and Pepper to taste

1 bunch minced fresh cilantro



Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees
2. Cut the pumpkin or squash in half lengthwise and remove seeds and fibers. Cover with aluminum foil and place the halves, cut side up, in a foil-lined shallow baking pan. Bake for 40-50 minutes, or until easily pierced with a knife but still firm (if using squash, prepare the same way). When cool enough to handle, scoop out the pulp, and cut into large dice. Set aside until needed.
3. Heat the oil in a soup pot. Add the onion and sauté over medium-low heat until translucent. Add the garlic and continue to sauté until the onion is golden.
4. Add the pumpkin/squash and all the remaining ingredients except the last 2 and bring to a simmer. Simmer gently, covered, until all the vegetables are tender, about 20-25 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
5. If time allows, let the stew stand for 1-2 hours before serving, then heat through as needed. Just before serving, stir in the cilantro. The stew should be thick and very moist but not soupy; add additional stock or water if needed. Serve in shallow bowls.

The Story of the Three Sisters

Once upon a time there were three sisters who lived together in a field. One of the three was a little sister, so young that she could only crawl at first, and if she wanted to stand up she had to twine herself around her eldest sister. This sister wore velvet green with delicate tendril ribbons. The second of the three sisters, wore a frock of bright yellow and had a way of running off across the field when the sun shone and the soft wind blew in her face. The third sister was the eldest. She was always standing very straight and tall above the other sisters trying to guard them.

There was only one way in which the three sisters were alike. They loved one another very much and were never separated. They were sure that they wouldn't be able to live apart.

After awhile, a stranger came to the sister's field. It was a little Haudenosaunee boy. He was as straight as an arrow and as fearless as the eagle that circled his head far above in the sky. He knew the way of talking to the birds and the small brothers of the earth, the mouse, the groundhog, the chipmunk, squirrel and fox. The three sisters were very interested in this little boy. They watched him fit his arrow in his bow, saw him carve a bowl with his knife and wondered where he went at night.

Late that summer, the youngest sister who couldn't stand up without the help of her big sister, disappeared. Her sisters mourned for her until the fall, but she did not return.

Once again the little boy came to the three sister's field. The two sisters who were left watched him and gazed at him with wonder at the prints of his moccasins marking his trail to the field.

That night the second of the sisters disappeared. This time it was the sister who dressed in brilliant yellow and always wanted to run off across the field. She left no mark of her going but it may have been that she set her feet in the moccasin tracks of the little boy.

Now there was only one sister left. Tall and straight she stood in the field not once bowing her head with sorrow, but it seemed to her that she could not bear to live in her field alone. The days grew shorter and the night grew colder. Her green shawl faded and grew thin and old. Her hair once long and golden was now brown and tangled by the wind.

But one day when it was the season for the final harvest, the little boy heard the crying of the third sister. He felt sorry for her so he took her in his arms and carried her to the lodge of his father and mother. Oh what a surprise awaited her! Her two lost sisters were there in the lodge of the little boy, safe and very glad to see her. They had been curious and had gone home with him to see how he lived. They had liked his warm longhouse so well and decided to stay there for the cold winter. And they were doing all they could to be useful.

The little sister in green was helping to keep the dinner pot full. The sister in yellow sat on the shelf and planned to fill the dinner pot later. The third sister joined them, ready to grind some meal for the family's bread. Ever since then the three sisters spend their spring and summer in the field together, and their winters in the longhouse, helping to feed families. The three have never been separated since.

Every child of today should know these three sisters and need them just as much as the little boy did. For the little sister is the bean who needs the eldest sister to keep her from crawling along the ground. The second sister is the squash, who has bright yellow flowers and tends to run away across the field. The eldest sister is the corn. Her kernels can be dried and ground up to make flour for bread. When the corn beans and squash are eaten, they provide a very nutritious meal with everything a person needs to be healthy.