

BUTTERY HAZELNUT AND WINTER SQUASH TIAN



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Start to finish: 1¾ hours (35 minutes active)

Servings: 6 to 8

This winter squash side comes together easily. It takes its name from a classic French Provençal dish of vegetables baked in a shallow, round earthenware vessel called a tian. Either a 9-inch deep-dish pie plate or an 8-inch square baking dish works fine. The awkward shape and density of butternut squash makes it a challenge to prep. An easy, safe approach is to use a sharp, sturdy chef's knife to trim off the ends, then use a vegetable peeler to remove the skin. Use the knife to cut the squash crosswise, separating the neck from the bulbous base, then halve each piece lengthwise. With a spoon, scoop out and discard the seeds from the bulb portions. Finally, with the flat side on the cutting board, slice each quarter. To prep ahead, remove the tian from the oven after the final 20 to 25 minutes of uncovered baking and hold off on adding the butter-hazelnut mixture; it will keep uncovered at room temperature for up to three hours. When ready to serve, remelt the butter-hazelnut mixture, spoon on top and bake at 450°F for 15 minutes.

Don't worry if the squash slices aren't exactly half-moon shaped, but do aim for slices no thicker than ¼ inch thick so the tian is evenly tender throughout. Make sure to place the slices with the rounded sides facing up and tightly packed into the pie plate or baking dish, but don't obsess about neat or perfect placement.

INGREDIENTS:

1 tablespoon salted butter, room temperature, plus 4 tablespoons salted butter, melted
2- to 2½-pound butternut squash, peeled, halved lengthwise, seeded and sliced crosswise into ¼-inch-thick half-moons
2 tablespoons sherry vinegar
1½ tablespoons honey
2 teaspoons fresh thyme, chopped
¾ teaspoon Aleppo pepper or sweet paprika
Kosher salt and ground black pepper
⅓ cup hazelnuts, chopped

Heat the oven to 450°F with a rack in the middle position. Coat the bottom and sides of a 9-inch deep-dish pie plate or 8-inch square baking dish with the room-temperature butter.

Place the squash slices, rounded sides up, in the pie plate or baking dish; shingle them as needed. They will be so tightly packed that they will almost stand upright. In a small bowl, stir together the melted butter, vinegar, honey, thyme, Aleppo pepper and ¼ teaspoon each salt and black pepper. Drizzle half of the butter mixture over the squash, then cover tightly with foil.

Bake until a skewer inserted at the center of the tian meets just a little resistance, about 40 minutes. Meanwhile, stir the hazelnuts into the remaining butter mixture; set aside.

Uncover the pie plate and bake until the squash begins to brown at the edges, 20 to 25 minutes. Meanwhile, if the butter-hazelnut mixture has solidified, remelt it. Remove the tian from the oven, then spoon the butter mixture over the squash, evenly distributing the nuts. Bake until the nuts are deeply browned, about 10 minutes. Cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature.