



Surviving Welcome Home & Mixed Greens with Warm Roasted Squash

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Thanksgiving is just a few short weeks away. Planes, trains and automobiles will fill to overflowing and carry loved ones home. Whether you're a college student who's been gone a month or two or a long lost cousin, it's time to hit the road and head home. If you're already home, then it's time to welcome all those far-flung friends and family when they return to the nest.

My dad actually had a cousin who disappeared for years at a time. While many of Howard's disappearances are still a mystery, they are the subject of occasional speculation. There were hints of international adventures. An imaginative soul could weave these trips abroad into tales of espionage or heroic missions of mercy. There might have been several wives. No, I'm not saying he was a bigamist but it would make an interesting story wouldn't it. Finally, you didn't hear it from me, but I seem to remember hushed suggestions of jail time. In the end I'm pretty sure most of the Howard tales were built on a smidgen of fact and a ton of supposition. It's been quite a while since his last visit, a couple of decades at least. If Howard is still alive, he's well over 100 so we don't expect to welcome him this Thanksgiving.

When I was an expatriate, at least once a week, someone or other would ask, "where's home?" When feeling clever, my favorite answer was that I carried a US passport, lived in Geneva and my office was any SwissAir lounge. If I felt a more serious reply was called for, I offered up Boston. It was not a great conversation starter. Unlike New York, Washington and Las Vegas, Beantown is not top of the pops for European tourists. When I was feeling sentimental, the answer was New Hampshire. I don't think I ever met anyone who had been to the Granite State. It didn't matter. As soon as those two words popped out, a picture of family and Pleasant Lake would flash in my brain and bring a smile to my face.



When I gave up the frenzied life of international businesswomen (alas, I was not a spy), I headed to New Hampshire. There were other options. I even thought about some of them for a minute or two. But Pleasant Lake was the natural choice, the only choice really. It was home.

What is home? It's not where you were born (Connecticut) or where you grew up (a suburb outside of Boston). It's not even where you lived the longest (Geneva). For me, it was the town and lake where my family vacationed for decades. It was the place where we swam and sailed in the summer and skied in the winter. It's where I had my first kiss and a few other firsts which I won't go into right now.

But as much as I love my little corner of paradise, home is more than an address. It's a place that brings a smile to your face, just by thinking about it ... even when you are thousands of miles away. It's a safe haven when you need one, a place to celebrate victories and recover from defeats. It's the place where you can laugh 'til tears roll down your cheeks and cry 'til you just can't cry anymore. Home is the family dinner table where you chat and debate and sometimes yell and curse in the vain hope that volume will somehow win the day. Home is the history you share with family and friends, both the ordinary events and the tall tales you tell. All of which are true, as best I can remember.

Whether you are coming home or welcoming loved ones, enjoy your time with family and friends.

Bon appétit!



Mixed Greens with Warm Roasted Squash

This colorful salad is perfect for Thanksgiving or any fall (or winter) feast. Enjoy!

Serves 8

- About 2 pounds butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1/4 teaspoon dried thyme
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- Apple cider vinegar
- Extra virgin olive oil
- 1 red onion, peeled, trimmed, cut in half lengthwise and then into thin wedges
- About 8 ounces mixed greens
- Cider Vinaigrette (recipe follows)
- 2 ounces Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 1/2 cup toasted pumpkin seeds

Put the squash in a single layer on rimmed baking sheets. Sprinkle with thyme, salt and pepper, drizzle with enough vinegar and oil to lightly coat and toss to combine. Roast at 375 degrees for 30 minutes or until lightly browned and tender. Let cool for a few minutes. (Can do ahead. Reheat the squash in a 350 degree oven for about 10 minutes. The squash should be warm but not hot and can also be served at room temperature.)

Put the onion in an oven proof skillet. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, drizzle with enough vinegar and oil to lightly coat and toss to combine. Roast at 375 degrees for 10 minutes or until tender crisp and lightly caramelized. Let cool for a few minutes. (Can do ahead. Reheat the onions in a 350 degree oven for about 10 minutes. The onions should be warm but not hot and can also be served at room temperature.)

To serve: Toss the greens with enough cider vinaigrette to lightly coat. Put the greens on individual plates or a large platter; arrange the squash and onion on top of the greens. Using a vegetable peeler or a course grater, make shavings from the Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese. Sprinkle the salad with the cheese shavings, cranberries and pumpkin seeds and serve.

Cider Vinaigrette

Makes about 1 1/2 cups

- 1/4 cup fresh apple cider
- 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 tablespoons chopped shallot or red onion
- 1/4 teaspoon or to taste hot pepper sauce
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- About 1 cup or to taste extra virgin olive oil

Put the cider, vinegar, mustard, garlic, shallots and pepper sauce in a blender or small food processor. Season with salt and pepper and process until smooth. With the motor running, slowly add the olive oil until emulsified. Transfer the vinaigrette to a storage container with a tight fitting lid.

Let the vinaigrette sit for 30 minutes or more to let the flavors combine. Give the vinaigrette a vigorous shake before using. Store extra vinaigrette in the refrigerator.



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