

## Cheesy Rice-Stuffed Acorn Squash: Your Perfect Fall Comfort Meal

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**OVEN**  
**400°F**

**TIME**  
**25-30 min**

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#### INGREDIENTS

2 medium acorn squash, halved and seeds removed  
2 tablespoons olive oil (for squash)  
1/2 teaspoon salt (for squash)  
1/4 teaspoon black pepper (for squash)  
1 cup cooked rice (white, brown, or wild)  
1 tablespoon olive oil or butter (for filling)  
1/2 small onion, finely chopped  
1 clove garlic, minced  
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme  
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano  
1 cup chopped spinach (or kale)  
1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese (or mozzarella)  
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese  
1/4 cup heavy cream (or milk)  
1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)  
Extra shredded cheese for broiling  
Chopped fresh parsley or thyme for garnish

#### DIRECTIONS

- 1. Prepare : Squash:** Start by preheating your oven to 400°F (200°C). Carefully halve the two medium acorn squashes and scoop out all the seeds and stringy bits. Brush the cut insides of the squash with 2 tablespoons of olive oil, then sprinkle with 1/2 teaspoon of salt and 1/4 teaspoon of black pepper.
- 2. Roast : Squash:** Place the squash halves cut-side down on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Pop them in the preheated oven and roast for about 25-30 minutes, or until they're fork-tender when gently pierced.
- 3. Sauté Aromatics for Filling:** In the meantime, grab a large skillet and heat up 1 tablespoon of olive oil or butter over medium heat. Toss in the finely chopped 1/2 small onion and sauté for about 3-4 minutes until it softens and becomes fragrant.
- 4. Add : Garlic & Herbs:** Stir in the minced 1 clove garlic, 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme, and 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano. Let it cook for about 30 seconds to release those delicious aromas, being careful not to burn the garlic.
- 5. Wilt : Greens:** Now, add in the 1 cup chopped spinach (or kale) and cook it, stirring occasionally, until it wilts down completely.
- 6. Create : Cheesy Rice Filling:** Stir the cooked vegetable mixture from the skillet into the 1 cup of cooked rice. Add the 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese (or mozzarella), 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese, 1/4 cup heavy cream (or milk), and the optional 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes. Mix until the cheese is gooey and melted, and all ingredients are well combined.

7. Season : Filling: Taste the filling and season with additional salt and pepper as needed to enhance the flavors.
8. Stuff : Squash: Once the roasted squash is out of the oven, carefully flip them over to reveal their tender cavities. Generously scoop in the cheesy rice mixture, mounding it slightly in each squash half.
9. Final : Bake/Broil: Top each stuffed squash filling with a sprinkle of extra shredded cheese. Place the stuffed squash back on the baking sheet. Bake them again for about 10 minutes until the cheese is melted and bubbly. Alternatively, for a quicker golden-brown top, you can broil for 2-3 minutes, watching closely to prevent burning.
10. Garnish & : Serve: Finally, garnish with fresh chopped parsley or thyme before serving warm.

## SWAPS & NOTES

Acorn Squash: Look for firm, unblemished squash.

You can also use other winter squash varieties like delicata or even small pumpkins, though cooking times might vary.

White rice will be softer, while brown or wild rice will offer more texture and a nutty flavor.

Using leftover cooked rice makes this dish even quicker.

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS

**Tender Squash:** Ensure your squash is roasted until genuinely fork-tender.

This makes it easier to scoop and more enjoyable to eat.

**Don't Overcook Garlic:** Garlic can turn bitter quickly.

Cook it just until fragrant, usually less than a minute.

**More recipes:** [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/cheesy-rice-stuffed-acorn-squash-your-perfect-fall-comfort-meal/>