

Wild Rice with Butternut Squash, Spinach, and Toasted Hazelnuts

Serve this healthy side hot with dinner, then drizzle the cold leftovers with a thin stream of hazelnut oil for lunch the next day. Hot or cold, you'll appreciate the dish's mild, nutty flavor and the mix of dramatic colors and textures.

Serves 4 to 6

1-1/2 cups wild rice
1 tablespoon olive oil
One 1-pound butternut squash, peeled and cut into 1/2" dice (yielding about 2-1/2 cups diced squash)
1/2 cup vegetable broth (or chicken broth)
6 ounces baby spinach, rinsed
1/2 cup toasted hazelnuts, roughly chopped
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
Hazelnut oil, optional, for leftovers

Cook the rice according to package directions. I cooked mine in a rice cooker with about 4 cups of water, and it took about 45 minutes.

Heat a large skillet over medium high heat. When hot, swirl in the oil and add the squash. Season generously with salt and pepper. Sauté the squash, flipping several times with a spatula and shaking the skillet with some muscle until it's golden brown on all sides, about 5 minutes. Reduce the heat, carefully add the broth, cover, and let cook on low heat until tender, about 3 minutes longer.

Uncover and raise the heat again to medium-high. Add the spinach and a bit more salt and pepper, and toss with tongs until spinach wilts and the liquid has evaporated slightly, about 4 minutes. Stir in the toasted hazelnuts. Remove from heat.

When the wild rice has finished cooking, add it to the skillet. The rice will be hot enough to warm up the squash mixture. Just be sure to give everything a good, thorough toss.

Serve hot immediately, or cold the next day with a slick of hazelnut oil.