

BUTTERNUT SQUASH-BLACK BEAN SOUP IN THE MICROWAVE in 15 minutes

If you have a food processor, pulse the carrots, celery, onion, garlic, and spices in the bowl fitted with the steel blade until finely minced. You could easily sub pumpkin for the butternut squash or cooked brown rice for the beans if that's more appealing. Makes 5-6 1-cup servings or 2 2 1/2-cup servings

- 2 tablespoons olive oil (needn't be extra virgin)
- 3 each carrots and celery stalks, minced
- 1 small onion, minced
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1/4 teaspoon each: ground cumin, crushed red pepper and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon each: grated ginger and kosher salt
- 15-ounce [can cooked, mashed butternut squash](#) or a 12-ounce box of frozen mashed [Winter Squash](#), or 2 cups pureed butternut squash
- 2 cups chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 or 2 15-ounce can drained black beans or 2 -3 cups homemade black beans
- Sour cream, Greek yogurt, or a drizzle of cream for garnish, optional

In an 8-cup glass measuring cup or similarly-sized microwave-safe bowl, stir together the olive oil and minced carrots, celery, onion and garlic with the ginger, cumin, peppers, and salt. Cover* and microwave on full power for 2 minutes. Uncover, stir, and cook another minute or two until nearly tender.

Stir the squash and broth into the cooked vegetables and spices and mix well. Cover again and microwave on high 5 minutes.

Uncover carefully and stir in the black beans. (If you'd like, purée it before adding the beans using an immersion blender in the bowl or carefully in batches in the regular blender. Hold blender top down with a towel.) Cover a last time and microwave on high 2 minutes. Taste and adjust seasonings to taste.** Serve hot with a drizzle of sour cream, yogurt, cream, or crushed tortilla chips for garnish, if desired.

**Plastic wrap works, but so will a microwave-safe dinner plate if it will fit in your microwave. Some of the newer 8-cup Pyrex glass measuring cups have their own lids.*

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