

Three Sisters Casserole with Cornbread Topping

Submitted by Linda Uhl, Cornell Botanic Gardens volunteer docent

For the cornbread topping:

- 1 1/4 cups yellow cornmeal
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour (or your favorite all-purpose gluten-free flour blend)
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1/2 cup whole milk
- 1/2 cup water

For the filling:

- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 yellow onion, diced (about 1 cup)
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 pound butternut or kabocha squash, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes (about 2 cups)
- 1 (15-ounce) can diced fire-roasted tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/4 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 3/4 cup vegetable broth
- 1 cup fresh or frozen corn kernels
- 1 (15-ounce) can kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 cups chopped greens (such as spinach or kale)
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1 Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray a 9x13-inch baking dish with non-stick cooking spray and set aside.

2 Make the filling: In a large, high-sided skillet or Dutch oven, warm the olive oil over medium heat until it's shimmering and add the onions. Cook until translucent, about 4 to 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for an additional minute.

Add the squash, tomatoes, tomato paste, spices, and salt. Stir in the broth and bring mixture to a boil.

3 Simmer the filling: Cover the pot and reduce heat to low. Simmer for 15 to 18 minutes, or until squash is tender.

4 Make the cornbread topping while the filling simmers: In a medium mixing bowl, whisk together cornmeal, flour, baking powder, and salt. Using a wooden spoon, slowly stir in the butter, milk, and water; mix only until just combined. Set aside and let it sit for ten minutes or so, while the filling simmers.

5 Add the rest of the ingredients to the filling: Stir in the corn, beans, and greens into the filling, and continue cooking, covered, for 3 to 5 minutes, until mixture has thickened slightly and all the ingredients are incorporated.

5 Transfer to baking dish and bake: Scrape the filling into the prepared pan and top with generous biscuit-sized clumps of cornbread topping (this can be rustic and uneven).

Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, or until filling is bubbling and topping is golden brown.

6 Serve: Remove from the oven allow to cool for 5-10 minutes before serving.