

Southern Squash Casserole is a Smash Hit

By Sharon Rigsby, July 30, 2020

Southern Squash Casserole is an irresistible side dish, made with summer or yellow squash in a cast-iron skillet. It features a crispy Ritz cracker and cheese topping and is the ultimate family-friendly side for any occasion.

What sets this delicious casserole apart from traditional squash casseroles is it doesn't contain any sour cream, mayonnaise, cream of whatever soup, or eggs.

The incredible flavor comes from fresh summer squash, onions, cheese, and bacon. And I'm warning you now, it's dangerously addictive.

Sharon's Tips:

- If you have ever had bacon stick while cooking it, check out my method in the directions of starting it in a cold skillet.
- I always use kosher salt when cooking. If you only have regular table salt, reduce the amount listed by one-half.
- If you don't have any Ritz crackers, canned fried onions, panko crushed pork rinds, or even crushed Cheez-It's are suitable substitutions.
- To make this casserole ahead, follow the directions up to the point of cooking and draining the squash. Store the squash mixture covered in your fridge for up to 48 hours. For the best results, hold off adding the cheese and bacon, and making the topping until you are ready to bake it.
- To easily crush the crackers, place them in a plastic storage bag, and crush with your hands or hit them lightly with a rolling pin or meat mallet. You can also use a food processor.

Southern Squash Casserole

Serves 6

Ingredients:

2 pounds yellow squash, thinly sliced
4 slices bacon, cooked, drained, and crumbled
2 tablespoons reserved bacon grease
6 ounces shredded sharp cheddar cheese, divided
24 Ritz crackers, crushed

½ cup chopped sweet onion
½ teaspoon Kosher salt
1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 tablespoon unsalted butter, melted

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees

Add the bacon to a cold cast-iron skillet over medium-low heat and cook for about 5 minutes or until the fat starts rendering out of the bacon. Turn the heat up to medium and cook, frequently turning, for another 5 to 6 minutes or until the bacon is browned and crispy.

Remove the bacon and let it drain on paper towels. Set aside. Leave the grease in the skillet.

Add the onion and cook for 1 to 2 minutes. Add the squash, plus salt and pepper, and cook and stir for 8 to 10 minutes or until the squash is tender.

While the squash is cooking, combine the crushed crackers with one-half cup of the shredded cheese and one tablespoon of melted butter in a medium sized bowl. Mix well and set aside.

Remove the skillet from the heat and pour the squash and onion into a colander. Use a paper towel or wooden spoon and gently press down to remove any excess liquid.

Wipe out the skillet with a paper towel and add the squash mixture. Top with one cup of shredded cheese and the crumbled bacon. Stir to combine and spread out evenly.

Sprinkle the cracker mixture evenly over the top and bake for 30 minutes or until the casserole is bubbly and the topping is golden brown.

Serve immediately.