



## plentiful pumpkins

Extract from *Cooking with pumpkins and squash*  
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### baby squash stuffed with pine outs, currants, lemon & herbs

The flavours here are Italian in style, specifically Sicilian, and I love the unexpected mix of sweet currants with the saltiness of the capers and cheese. The lemon and mint lifts the whole thing. This is lovely served either warm or at room temperature. A Greek-style salad with some tomatoes, feta cheese and red onion would work perfectly as an accompaniment.

Serves 4



4 small acorn squashes or  
 4 good-sized courgettes (about 18-20  
 cm long)  
 1 tablespoon salted capers  
 30 g currants  
 1 medium onion, finely chopped  
 5-6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
 2-3 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
 120 g fresh white breadcrumbs  
 2 tablespoons chopped flat leaf parsley  
 2 tablespoons chopped mint leaves  
 1-2 teaspoons grated lemon zest  
 50 g Parmesan cheese, freshly grated  
 50 g pine nuts, lightly toasted  
 1 medium egg, beaten (optional)  
 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed  
 lemon juice  
 sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

**an ovenproof baking dish, oiled**

If using acorn or other small summer squash, just cut off a thin slice from the base so that they stand upright without wobbling, then cut off a lid and scoop out the seeds to make a cavity. If using courgettes, halve them lengthways and, using a teaspoon, remove the seeds in the centre to leave a 'boat' shape. Season the cut surfaces with salt and leave them upside down to drain. In two separate bowls, cover the capers and currants with warm water and leave them to soak.

When the squashes or courgettes have drained for 45-60 minutes, rinse them, pat dry, then steam for 10-12 minutes until just tender. Drain well on kitchen paper. Preheat the oven to 190°C (375°F) Gas 5.

Meanwhile, gently fry the onion in 2 tablespoons of the oil with a pinch of salt until soft and sweet, about 10-15 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for another 3-4 minutes. Drain the capers and currants. Mix the onion and garlic with all the other ingredients except the egg, remaining oil and lemon juice. Season to taste. Stir in the egg for a firmer stuffing, if desired. Put the squash or courgettes in a baking dish and fill the cavities with the stuffing. Mix together the remaining oil and lemon juice and spoon it over the vegetables. Bake in the preheated oven for 30-35 minutes, basting once, until golden and crisp on top. Serve warm with a Greek-style salad.