

ACORN SQUASH TART WITH SPICY PECAN BRITTLE AND CANDIED BACON

Yield: 6 Portions

Ingredients	Amounts
<i>Tart Shell</i>	
Pecans, toasted	3 oz. wt.
All-purpose flour	9 oz. wt.
Sugar	8 Tbsp.
Unsalted butter, cold, ½-inch cubes	8 oz. wt.
Water, ice cold	1/3 cup
<i>Acorn Squash Mousse</i>	
Acorn squash, halved, seeded	3 ea.
Vegetable oil	1 Tbsp.
Ground cinnamon	¼ tsp.
Vanilla extract	½ tsp.
Maple syrup	1 Tbsp.
Sugar	2 Tbsp.
Heavy cream	1 cup
<i>Spicy Pecan Brittle</i>	
Water	¼ cup
Sugar	1 cup
Light corn syrup	¼ cup
Unsalted butter, cubed	3 Tbsp.
Baking soda	½ tsp.
Cayenne	1/4 tsp.
Pecan pieces, toasted	¾ cup
<i>Candied Bacon</i>	
Brown sugar	¼ cup
Thick-cut bacon	3 slices
<i>Garnish</i>	
Thyme leaves, fresh	2 tsp.
Pecans, whole, toasted	18 ea.
Parmesan cheese, grated (optional)	¼ cup
Maldon salt	as needed
Thyme sprigs	6 ea.

Method

1. *For the Tart Shell:* Place the pecans, flour, and sugar into a food processor and process until pecans are coarsely ground.

2. Add butter cubes to the flour mixture and pulse until a flaky texture develops. Add water and pulse until combined.
3. Roll the dough between two pieces of plastic wrap until it is ¼ inch thick. Place onto a baking sheet and chill for 20 minutes.
4. Once chilled, cut out circles slightly larger than the 4-inch tart shells and press the dough into the sides evenly. Place the dough circles in the tart pans, making sure the dough is pressed into the shells. Prick the bottom of the tarts with a fork a few times and chill them for 30 minutes.
5. Preheat the oven to 325°F.
6. Once chilled, place a parchment round on top of the dough in each tart shell and add baking beans or weights.
7. Bake in the oven for 15 minutes, remove the baking beans and parchment paper, and bake for another 15 minutes, until golden brown. Remove from oven and cool completely. Release the tart from the shells.
8. *For the Acorn Squash Mousse:* Turn oven up to 350°F.
9. Coat the squash with the oil and place cut side down on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Roast until fully softened, about 25-30 minutes. Cool.
10. Scoop out the cooked squash flesh, leaving the skin behind, and puree in a food processor with the cinnamon, vanilla, maple syrup, and sugar until very smooth.
11. Whip the heavy cream until stiff peaks form. Fold the squash puree into the whipped cream until just combined. Cover and chill.
12. *For the Spicy Pecan Brittle:* Line a sheet pan with a silicon mat. In a medium saucepan, stir together the water, sugar, and corn syrup. Bring to a boil, and continue to boil until it reaches 340°F and is golden brown. This will take about 15 minutes.
13. Once at 340°F, remove the pot from the heat and quickly stir in the butter, baking soda, and cayenne. Pour the mixture onto the lined baking pan and sprinkle the pecans over the entire pan, allowing them to sink in. Let cool. Chop coarsely into ¼-inch pieces.
14. *For the Candied Bacon:* Coat the bacon in brown sugar.
15. Place bacon on a silicon mat-lined sheet pan and bake in the 350°F oven for 15-20 minutes. Allow to cool. Chop into ¼-inch dice.
16. *To Assemble:* Place a swoosh of some of the acorn squash mousse onto the plate. Pipe the acorn squash mousse into a tart shell, and top with the spicy pecan brittle, the candied bacon, parmesan (if using), thyme, and Maldon salt. Place on the plate along with 3 pecans, and a thyme sprig.

Source: Nyah Marshall