

## Southwestern Stuffed Acorn Squash

*Yield: approximately 4 servings*

- 1 Large or 2 small acorn squash  
Avocado or other high heat oil
- 8 Ounces bulk Italian sausage (turkey or veg. okay)  
(can be omitted, if desired)
- 1 Small onion, finely chopped (3/4 cup)
- ½ Red bell pepper, finely chopped (1/2 cup)
- 1 Teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 Tablespoon chili powder
- 1 Teaspoon ground cumin
- 2 Cups chopped fresh tomatoes (preferable grape or cherry) or 1 (15 oz.) can petite diced
- 1 Can (15 oz.) black beans, drained and rinsed  
Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1 Cup shredded Swiss (or other type) cheese or cheese alternative



Preheat oven to 400 degF. Scrub outside of squash to remove any dirt. Cut squash in half horizontally and scoop out seeds. Place squash halves, cut side down in a baking dish (glass preferably). Add water to a level of about ¼ inch and bake until tender, about 35-45 minutes. Remove from oven and set aside and reduce oven temperature to 325 degF.

Heat skillet over medium heat; add small amount of oil, then sausage and cook, stirring and breaking up with a wooden spoon, until meat is lightly browned, 3-5 minutes. (\* if not using meat, skip this step. Add oil to generously coat bottom of pan and then add onions and pepper.)

Add onion and bell pepper; cook, stirring often, until softened, 3-5 minutes. Stir in garlic, chili powder and cumin; cook for 30 seconds until very fragrant. Stir in tomatoes and beans, scraping up any browned bits. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer until the tomatoes are broken down, 10-12 minutes.

Divide filling among squash halves. Top with cheese. Place back in the baking dish (discard water) and bake until heated through and cheese is melted, 8-10 minutes.