



## **Butternut Squash and Cheddar Strata**

Serves 6-8

Serve with Joseph Phelps Merlot or Freestone Vineyards Chardonnay

7 large eggs  
2 ¼ cups half and half  
6 Tbsp dry white wine (Fogdog Chardonnay works well)  
1 ½ tsp Dijon mustard  
½ tsp Kosher salt plus additional as needed  
10 cups of day old bread cubes (16-18 oz bread. I use leftover bread for this recipe, but if you had to use fresh bread, it is fine to cube it and then toast it in a 225 degree oven for 20 minutes to dry it out.)  
2 lbs butternut squash  
3 Tbsp olive oil, divided  
1 cup chopped shallots  
1 lb Tuscan kale (also called lacinato kale or dino kale; I would not use any other kind of kale for this recipe), ribs removed, coarsely chopped  
8 oz extra sharp cheddar cheese, coarsely grated

Whisk eggs in large bowl. Add half and half, wine, mustard and 1 ½ tsp salt. Add bread cubes to this mixture and allow the bread to soak in the refrigerator while you are preparing the other ingredients. It helps to stir the bread cubes every 30 minutes or so to encourage even soaking.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Cut squash in half and scoop out seeds. Brush 1 Tbsp olive oil over surface and sprinkle with salt. Place squash halves in a pot (with lid) large enough to hold both skin side down or on their sides. Add water to ½ inch in pot. Cover pot and place in oven for 60 minutes until squash is tender. Remove from oven and allow squash to cool before scooping out flesh from squash.

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Reduce oven to 350 degrees.

Sauté shallots in large pot with 2 Tbsp olive oil. When shallots are soft, add kale, cover and cook for 2 minutes. Uncover and stir until kale is wilted but still bright green. Do not overcook. Stir in the butternut squash flesh, mixing well.

Generously butter a 13 x 9 x 2 baking dish. (If you have it, an oval Emile Henry gratin dish – 10 x 16; 3.5 quart capacity is perfect for this recipe.) Using a slotted spoon, transfer half of bread mixture to the baking dish and spread evenly. Spoon half of kale/squash mixture over the bread and then half of cheese. Repeat the layers until ingredients are used up. Pour remaining egg mixture over all and cover with foil.

Bake 20 minutes at 350 degrees.

Remove foil and continue baking until custard is set and bread feels springy (up to 20 minutes). If needed, put the strata under broiler until cheeses brown slightly (about 2 minutes).