

# WINTER SQUASH WITH CARAMELIZED ONIONS (CASSOLITA)

My friend Joan Nathan, who knows a great deal about Sephardic Moroccan cooking, kindly provided this recipe. You'll find more of them in her *Quiches, Kugels, and Couscous: My Search for Jewish Cooking in France*.

The word *cassolita* comes from the Spanish word *cassola* or *cazuela*, a word that can refer to both a round earthenware pot and the dishes that are cooked in it. This Sephardic *cassolita* from Tetouan is scented with cinnamon and caramelized onions and gets a nice crunch from fried almonds. It is typically served with lamb couscous, but it will go well with any hearty meat dish. It can be made ahead and then reheated before serving.

— Serves 6 —

2 pounds butternut, calabaza, or kabocha squash, halved lengthwise and seeded	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
3 tablespoons vegetable oil	2 teaspoons sugar, plus (optional) 1 tablespoon
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup slivered almonds	1 teaspoon ground Ceylon cinnamon
2 pounds onions, thinly sliced into rounds	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup dark raisins
Salt	Freshly ground black pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Place the squash cut side down on a rimmed baking sheet. Add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water, cover with aluminum foil, and bake until the squash is very soft, about 30 minutes. Remove from the oven, and, once cool enough to handle, scoop out the pulp into a large bowl.
3. Heat the oil in a large skillet. Toss in the almonds and cook until golden. With a slotted spoon, remove to a plate and set aside.
4. Sauté the onions in the same pan over medium heat until translucent. Add salt to taste, 2 tablespoons of the parsley, 2 teaspoons of the sugar, the cinnamon, and raisins and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, for about 30 more minutes, until the onions are caramelized.
5. Gently fold the onions into the squash. Season with pepper and more salt, if necessary, and sprinkle with the remaining parsley, the almonds, and, if you wish, the extra tablespoon of sugar. Serve warm.