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## Thai-spiced Pumpkin Soup

- 2 acorn, pumpkin, or other smallish winter squash
- 3 tbsps butter, room temperature
- 1 14-oz can coconut milk
- 1 tsp (or more) red Thai curry paste
- 2 tsp Celtic sea salt, plus extra for roasting water

Preheat the oven at 375°F and place the oven racks in the middle. Carefully cut each squash in halves or quarters. Slather each piece of squash with butter, sprinkle generously with Celtic sea salt, place on a baking sheet skin sides down, and place in the oven. Roast for about an hour or until the squash is tender throughout.

When the pumpkin/squash are cool enough to handle, scoop it into a large pot over medium high heat. Add the coconut milk and curry paste and bring to a simmer. Remove from the heat and puree with a hand blender; you should have a very thick base at this point. Add water a cup at a time, pureeing between additions until the soup is the consistency you prefer – a light vegetable stock would work here as well. Bring up to a simmer again and add the salt (and more curry paste if you like). Serves 6.

Adapted from Heidi Swanson, [www.101cookbooks.com](http://www.101cookbooks.com).

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### Nutritional Value of Select Ingredients

**Winter Squash** – Squash is a powerhouse of beta-carotene (which gets converted to vitamin A in the body). It's great for preserving eyesight, minimizing cataracts, warding off infections, cancer, stroke, and heart disease. It can minimize the risk of lung cancer in those who smoke or are exposed to second hand smoke.

**Coconut Milk** – Comprised of 25% coconut oil and 67% water, coconut milk has been part of a healthy tropical lifestyle for thousands of years, and is very stable for cooking. The oils from the coconut are monosaturates of the omega 7 family. Contrary to popular belief, coconut oil actually helps raise good HDL cholesterol levels. Thailand, where coconut is found in virtually every dish, has the one of the lowest cancer rates in the world.

**Turmeric** – Turmeric is one of the spices typically found in curry pastes and powders. This bright yellow member of the ginger family has a long list of health benefits. It is beneficial for those with flatulence, jaundice, menstrual difficulties, bruises, chest pain, colic, and rheumatoid arthritis. It is a powerful anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and anti-cancer spice. Add it to soups, dressings, stir-fries, pastas; it has a strong colour but not a strong taste.

**Sea Salt** – When you do use salt, sea salt provides a wide range of minerals including potassium and iodine, not just sodium. It is produced by the evaporation of seawater, so contains all the natural minerals of the sea. Use in moderation.