Moroccan Roasted Butternut Squash

I created this recipe after trying to make Spiced Lentils with Pumpkin a few times. It is a Moroccan recipe by Tess Mallos that I found in *The food of Morocco: a journey for food lovers*. In that recipe the squash and the lentils are cooked together, with correct timing, but in a stewed fashion. I decided to instead roast the squash with spices and add to the very end. One issue with roasting squash is that often it falls apart into a mush. Thus I remembered that my Mom, Dioraci Urtassum, makes a sweet squash dish where it is cooked for a long time in sirup and never falls apart. The secret it to use calcium to set the pectin in the squash before cooking it. Thus I resorted to pickle crisp, which is a calcium product used to ensure that pickles remain crisp. In Edmonton I found pickle crisp at Canadian Tire.

**Ingredients:**

- 1 1/2 tablespoon of pickle crisp
- 1 small butternut squash (1 1/2 to 2 pounds)
- 1/2 teaspoon of salt
- 1 teaspoon of turmeric
- 1/2 teaspoon of paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon of cumin
- 2 tablespoon of olive oil

**Procedure:**

1. **Prepare the pumping**
   - Peel the pumpkin removing all the white part of the peel.
   - Cut the pumpkin in 3/4-inch cubes.
   - Mix one tablespoon of pickle crisp with half gallon of cold water.
   - Put the pumpkin in the water and let soak for at least 45 minutes. It can soak overnight.

2. **Season the pumpkin**
   - Drain the pumpkin and rinse under running cold water.
   - Leave in a colander or strainer until most of the water has dripped off.
   - Mix the spices in a small bowl.
   - Sprinkle the salt over the pumpkin tossing by lifting the bowl.
   - Sprinkle the spices on the salted pumpkin.
   - Let it seat for at least 45 minutes, but up to several hours.

3. **Roast the pumpkin**
   - Put a light colour metal rimmed baking sheet in the over.
   - Pre-heat the oven to 350 F.
   - Once the oven is hot, remove the hot baking sheet from the oven, and put the olive oil on it making sure to spread over a large area in the center.
• Transfer the seasoned pumpkin from the bowl onto the oiled baking sheet and put back in the oven.
• Roast for 45 minutes.
• Using a spatula, turn the pumpkin pieces around, rotate the baking sheet.
• Continue roasting for another 15 to 30 minutes until a sharp paring knife pierces through the pieces of pumpkin easily.

4. Serving or using in another recipe

• You can serve warm immediately after roasting.
• If using in another recipe, it can be prepared a day in advance, cooled, placed into the refrigerator, and warmed up either in the over or in the microwave the next day.