

GARDEN

DECEMBER 2006 | JANUARY 2007

# plate

thehesitantgourmet

## Building a better butternut

Butternut squash is plentiful in the Garden State this time of year, but you might have to go hunting to find someone who sings its praises. That is, until it falls into the right hands, or soup. After a few spoonfuls of Chef Edward Lake's butternut beauty, you'll be humming a different tune.

*You know you fill me up Butternut, baby  
Never let me down (let me down)  
or mess me around  
And then best of all (best of all),  
you're most plentiful in the fall, baby  
I need you (I need you)  
more than any squash, darlin'  
You know that I have from the start  
So fill me up (fill me up) Butternut,  
don't break my heart*

— Jeff Linkous

**Edward Lake**  
Executive Chef,  
Chakra



Photo by Cathy Miller

### Butternut Squash Soup

Serves 4

- |                                       |                                       |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 lb. butternut squash, diced         | ½ tsp. ground cloves                  |
| ¼ cup leeks, white part only, chopped | 2 qts. chicken stock                  |
| ¼ cup yellow onions, chopped          | ½ cup crème fraîche                   |
| 1 Tbsp. garlic, minced                | Sea salt, to taste                    |
| 1 lb. whole butter                    | Freshly ground black pepper, to taste |

**Sweating vegetables:** This process is similar to sautéing, but it is done using the water from the vegetables and little to no oil. The goal is to soften the vegetables not brown them.

In a non-reactive sauce pan, sweat the squash, leeks, onions, garlic, butter and ground cloves. When the onions are soft, add the chicken stock. Simmer until all vegetables are tender. In a blender, puree all ingredients until smooth, pour into a bowl. Stir in crème fraîche and adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper. Serve in warm bowls with crusty bread.

— Recipe courtesy of Edward Lake