**Butternut Squash and Vegetable Gratin**

*As served at the Food for Thought – Healthy Foods Summit 2010*

*By Brenda Langton*

When fall comes, this is one of the first meals I make. I feel fortunate to have a good market where I can go and fill my trunk with a variety of squash from one of my favorite growers. Everyone calls her "the potato lady" because she grows many varieties of potatoes. I call her the "squash lady!" This gratin is nice served with wild rice, salad, and fresh bread.

1 medium butternut squash
6 cloves garlic, minced
2 cups leeks, cut in half and sliced
1 red bell pepper, julienned
½ tablespoon olive oil
3 cups mushrooms, sliced (wild mushrooms are great if available)
1½ tablespoons butter
6-8 tomatoes, sliced
¼ cup chopped herbs (a mixture of any of these: basil, marjoram, parsley, rosemary, thyme, mint, sage)
½ teaspoon each salt and pepper
¾ cup roasted walnuts
1 cup grated gruyere cheese

Peel squash and slice into ¼- to ½-inch strips. Lightly brush with olive oil, salt, and pepper and bake on a cookie sheet at 375° for about 15 minutes, or until almost tender.

Over medium flame sauté garlic, leeks, and red bell pepper for 5 minutes in ½ tablespoon olive oil. Set aside.

Over medium flame sauté mushrooms in 1½ tablespoons butter for 5 minutes or until golden brown, stirring frequently. Lightly salt. Set aside.

In a baking dish (approximately 8 x 11), layer ingredients in the following order: squash, mushrooms, leek-pepper-garlic mixture, tomatoes, herbs, salt and pepper, walnuts, and cheese.

Preheat oven to 350°.

Bake covered for 30 minutes and uncovered for 10 minutes.