



## Honeynut Do List

This must-try baby squash with big flavor has High Hampton diners asking for seconds

BY JACOB HOLLIFIELD

ILLUSTRATION MARTA SPENDOWSKA

**k**nown as the lovechild of the well-known butternut and buttercup squashes, the honeynut gleams a similar, yet enhanced flavor that rules the rows at farmers markets beginning each September. Most often halved and roasted, or blended into a soup, the honey in honeynut comes from its color and unmistakable sweetness—both of which scream fall. Less than half the size of the butternut squash, the honeynut packs concentrated sweet flavor, an attribute that attracted the chefs at Cashiers, North Carolina’s High Hampton Resort. It was a few seasons back when sous chef Dan McCranie came across the squash while interning under executive chef Scott Franqueza during his time at Blackberry Mountain. McCranie sampled it in a dish with a ginger crumble that ignited the flavors. That same day, he tasted a romesco from the lunch menu. The two dishes inspired him to experiment with both concepts using the same ingredients. The result? A honeynut squash romesco to paint the plate on which a hanger steak and griddle cake are served. “There are

many times when people will ask for a side of the romesco to be sent out to the table,” says McCranie—a request they always oblige.

### EASY DOES IT

For the home chef, Franqueza and McCranie recommend an oven-roasted intro to honeynut squash. An even dice, high-quality olive oil, rosemary, and—McCranie’s secret ingredient—ground ginger highlight all the sweet and savory flavors from the squash.

### WARM AND TOASTY

“You can totally toast those seeds and use them like you would pumpkin

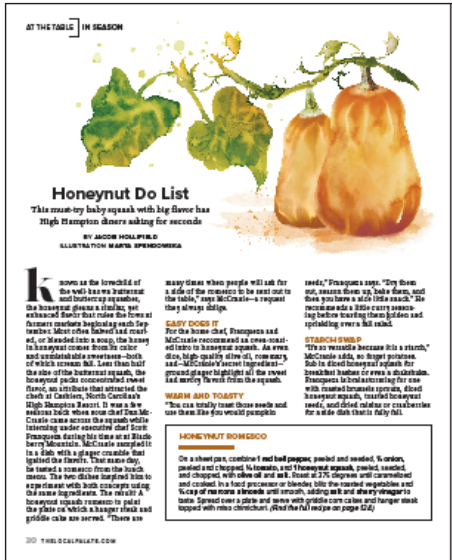
seeds,” Franqueza says. “Dry them out, season them up, bake them, and then you have a nice little snack.” He recommends a little curry seasoning before toasting them golden and sprinkling over a fall salad.

### STARCH SWAP

“It’s so versatile because it is a starch,” McCranie adds, so forget potatoes. Sub in diced honeynut squash for breakfast hashes or even a shakshuka. Franqueza is brainstorming for one with roasted brussels sprouts, diced honeynut squash, toasted honeynut seeds, and dried raisins or cranberries for a side dish that is fully fall.

### HONEYNUT ROMESCO

On a sheet pan, combine **1 red bell pepper**, peeled and seeded, **½ onion**, peeled and chopped, **½ tomato**, and **1 honeynut squash**, peeled, seeded, and chopped, with **olive oil** and **salt**. Roast at 375 degrees until caramelized and cooked. In a food processor or blender, blitz the roasted vegetables and **¼ cup of marcona almonds** until smooth, adding **salt** and **sherry vinegar** to taste. Spread over a plate and serve with griddle corn cakes and hanger steak topped with miso chimichurri. *(Find the full recipe on page 124.)*



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### Hanger Steak with Griddle Corn Cakes, Honeynut Romesco, and Miso Chimichurri

SERVES 2

#### For the miso chimichurri:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon tamari
- 1 teaspoon fish sauce
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon white miso
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- ½ shallot, minced
- Zest and juice of 1 lime
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon
- Minced parsley to taste
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

#### For the griddle corn cakes:

- 1 cup fresh corn kernels
- ½ cup cornmeal
- ½ cup kale chiffonade
- ½ cup buttermilk
- Dash cayenne powder
- Dash baking powder
- Dash baking soda
- ½ teaspoon minced garlic
- ½ teaspoon butter
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

#### For the hanger steaks:

- 2 hanger steaks
- Grapeseed oil
- Garlic, chopped
- Thyme, chopped
- Rosemary, chopped
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Honeynut Romesco (page 20)

**1. Make the miso chimichurri:** Stir all ingredients together in a small bowl and set aside.

**2. Make the griddle corn cakes:** In a pot, cook fresh corn kernels with ¼ cup of water until soft. Strain and let cool. In a bowl, combine all ingredients except garlic and butter with cooled kernels.

**3. Mix garlic and butter together.** Heat a nonstick pan over medium heat and add garlic butter. Once melted, add a few 1-ounce dollops of batter to pan. Cook on one side until bubbles form on top and bottom is browned. Flip cake and cook until golden brown on both sides. Set on wire rack to cool. Repeat with remaining batter.

**4. Make the hanger steak:** Generously cover surface of steaks with grapeseed oil and a mixture of freshly chopped garlic, thyme, and rosemary. Allow steaks to marinate in fridge between 2 hours and overnight.

**5. Heat grill to high heat.** Season steaks with salt and pepper and grill, flipping once, until they reach desired temperature (120 to 125 degrees for medium rare). Rest steaks for 5 minutes before slicing and serving.

**6. Place a generous smear of honeynut romesco onto plate.** Top with 3 griddle cakes and sliced hanger steak. Finish with miso chimichurri.

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**4. Transfer to a serving platter,** arranging everything so that onions and chiles are scattered around peach halves.

**5. Grill chicken until a thermometer** inserted in thickest part of a thigh registers 165 degrees, 5 to 7 minutes per

side. Transfer to serving platter, setting cooked thighs right on top of grilled peaches, onions, and chiles. Drizzle some Spiced Honey (recipe follows) over top and garnish with mint before serving.

#### Spiced Honey MAKES ABOUT ¾ CUP

*You can make this spiced honey while the chicken marinates and the grill heats, or up to a day in advance. It is delicious drizzled on top of biscuits, too.*

- ½ cup honey
- 1 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon coriander seeds, crushed
- 1 teaspoon fennel seeds
- 1 teaspoon salt

Combine all ingredients in a small saucepan, add ¼ cup water, and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Once mixture simmers, give it a stir and remove from heat. If not using right away, transfer to a storage container. Allow to cool completely before covering and storing at room temperature.

