Butternut Squash & Apple Soup

- 1 tbsp olive or coconut oil
- 2 onions, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced. I love garlic, but if it's not your favourite then decrease it or omit it.
- 2 tsp dried rosemary leaves or 1 tbsp chopped fresh rosemary leaves
- ½ tsp cracked black peppercorns
- 5 cups vegetable or chicken stock
- 1 butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2-3 tart apples such as Granny Smith, cored, peeled and chopped, depending on size and your personal taste!
- Sea salt (optional)

1. In a skillet, heat oil over medium heat for 30 seconds. Add onions and cook, stirring until softened, about 3 minutes.
2. Add garlic, rosemary and peppercorns and cook, stirring for 1 minute.
3. Transfer to slow cooker and add stock.
4. Stir in squash and apples.
5. Cover and cook on low for 8 hours or high for 4 hours, until squash is tender.
6. Working in batches, puree soup in a food processor or blender (or use an immersion blender directly in the slow cooker stoneware).
7. Season to taste with sea salt.
8. To make it fancy – slice another apple and garnish with the apple slices

Notes:
- Play around with your seasonings. About 1hr before you are going to serve the soup, have a taste and decide if it needs anything else.
  - Ginger is a good compliment so if you like it then add about ½ tsp ground ginger and maybe a pinch of nutmeg and cinnamon. In that case omit the rosemary.
  - For a bit of a punch you can add some ground cumin (1tsp) or cayenne pepper (1/4tsp).
- I personally like to add extra veggies to my soups so that I eat more during the day, so I typically add carrots and celery as well. Maybe try it both ways and see what you like best!
- For those that found the squash peeling a pain, just bake the entire squash until soft. Split in half, seed, then scoop out pulp. If you do this then do not add it until the end, when the apples are tender and then blend it all together.
- I have also heard of some people adding apple cider to kick up the apple taste! If you want to try that, then decrease the stock by whatever amount you will be adding.