

Food Bytes

HEALTH & NUTRITION PROGRAM, SNAP EDUCATION

 UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA | EXTENSION



Winter Squash

September 2016



Winter squash are good sources of Vitamin A, beta carotene, potassium, vitamin C, niacin, folate, iron, and fiber. Each variety of winter squash has a

different texture, aroma and flavor. Winter squash is low in calories and goes well with meats, fruits and other vegetables. Winter squash works with both sweet and savory dishes.

Winter squash is harvested in September and October when it is completely mature. You can find winter squash at your farmer's market and local grocery store.



Roasting winter squash seeds is easy. Rinse the seeds well in a colander and dry with paper towels. Spread them on an oiled sheet pan and bake at 250°F until they are light brown. Salt if desired and store in an airtight container.

Selecting Winter Squash

- Look for a hard or sturdy rind with the stem attached
- Choose one that is heavy for its size
- Avoid squash with cuts, dents, sunken spots or moldy on the rind
- A tender rind means that the squash is not ripe and will lack flavor

Storing Winter Squash

- Keep for up to 3 months in a cool dry place
- Store with the stem still attached to help retain moisture
- Once cut, store squash covered in plastic wrap or in an airtight container in the refrigerator. Store no longer than 4 or 5 days
- Frozen cooked squash stays fresh for up to 1 year

Baking Squash

This cooking method brings out the sweetness in winter squash. Baking also helps to retain the beta-carotene content.

To prepare, cut small squash in two lengthwise. Next remove the strings and seeds with a scoop. If the squash is large, cut into serving size pieces. The squash can be baked by placing the pieces (rind side down) on a foil-lined baking pan. The foil will make clean up easier and stop the juice from burning onto the pan.

Put about 1 cup of water into the pan and cover with foil. Bake in the oven at 350°F until the squash is tender. Check the tenderness by piercing the flesh with a knife or toothpick. Cooking the squash halves for about 40 to 45 minutes. Let the squash cool and remove from the skin with a spoon.



Cook or bake a winter squash variety you haven't tasted before. Or try a new recipe. You may discover a new favorite!

Varieties of winter squash:

Acorn	Hubbard
Butternut	Pumpkin
Buttercup	Spaghetti



SQUASH SOUP

1 Tablespoon oil	5 cups chicken or vegetable broth, low-sodium
2 onions (medium, chopped)	4 cups winter squash (cooked)
2 carrots (medium, chopped)	1 1/2 Tablespoons oregano (dried)
2 garlic cloves (minced)	1 1/2 Tablespoons basil (dried)
1 cup tomato puree (canned)	

In large saucepan, warm oil over medium heat. Stir in onions, carrots and garlic. Cook for about 5 minutes, covered. Stir in the tomato puree, chicken broth, cooked squash and herbs. Bring soup to a simmer and cook covered for 30 minutes. Serves 6.

Serving: calories 123, carbohydrate 20g, fat 4g, sodium 92mg, protein 6g

Source: What's Cooking? USDA Mixing Bowl

SQUASH-APPLE CASSEROLE

2 ½ cups winter squash (such as acorn, butternut or hubbard)	½ teaspoon nutmeg
1 ½ cups apples (cooking, such as Macintosh, Granny Smith or Rome)	1 teaspoon cinnamon



Wash and cut squash and apples into slices (for extra fiber, keep peel on apples). Alternate layers of squash and apples in 8x8 inch pan; end with apples. Sprinkle spices over top layer. Cover with aluminum foil.

Bake at 350 degrees for 45-60 minutes, until squash is tender. Serves 6.

Serving: calories 40, carbohydrate 11g, sodium 0mg; fat 0g, protein 1g

Source: What's cooking? USDA Mixing Bowl



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The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact the MN Food HelpLine at 1-888-711-1151.

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