Winter Squash Basics

Winter squash is an excellent source of vitamin A and also provides many minerals.

Shop and Save

- Choose squash that are firm and heavy for their size with dull skin. Avoid squash with soft spots or broken skin.
- Winter squash is usually available year round but may cost less and taste better in fall and winter.
- Canned winter squash are available year round and might be the best buy if you only need a small amount. Some squash are also available frozen.

Store Well Waste Less

- Store whole squash in a cool, dark, dry place. If uncut, some varieties can last up to 3 months.
- Rinse squash under running water before peeling or cutting. Once cut, wrap tightly and store in refrigerator for up to 1 week.
- Freeze cooked squash to use later. Pack recipe-sized amounts in airtight containers and use within 1 year.

Some Popular Types of Squash

Most types of winter squash can be used in any recipe or dish

- Butternut
- Pumpkin
- Hubbard
- Acorn
- Spaghetti
- Delicata
- Kobocha

Keep Seeds for Roasting

Microwave in a covered microwave-safe dish until seeds are crispy, stirring occasionally or Bake in the oven on a flat pan. Slow roast at 250 degrees F. or fast roast at 400 degrees F. Watch closely to avoid burning.
Enjoy Winter Squash

Cook Winter Squash
Most winter squash have tough, hard skins. It is easier to cook them with the skin on.

1. Wash the skin and cut squash in half lengthwise or in 1-inch rings. If squash is too tough to cut, microwave or bake for a few minutes until squash is warm to the touch and soft enough to cut.

2. Remove seeds and stringy fibers with a spoon. Save seeds for roasting; cover and refrigerate for up to 1 day.

3. Cook squash. Squash is done when it can be easily pierced by a fork.

Microwave (shortest cooking time). Place squash cut side down on a microwave-safe dish with 1 to 2 tablespoons water. Cook on HIGH, checking for doneness every few minutes. Cooking time depends on amount of squash and power of the microwave.

Bake at 350 to 425 degrees F. Line a baking dish with foil for easier clean up. For a “roasted” flavor, rub squash with a little vegetable oil and cook uncovered. For a “steamed” texture, add ½ cup water to the pan and cover with foil. Check for doneness after about 45 minutes. Larger squash may take longer to cook.

4. Season cooked squash as you please:
   - Sweet: try cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice or ginger
   - Savory: try garlic powder, onion powder, chili powder, oregano or parsley

5. Refrigerate or freeze leftovers.

Top Spaghetti Squash
Try pasta sauce, parmesan cheese, sauteed vegetables or chili.

Go to FoodHero.org for easy, tasty squash recipes

Butternut Squash and Chile Pan-Fry

Ingredients:
- 1 medium butternut squash, about 1½ to 2 pounds
- 1½ Tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon chili powder
- 1 can (8 ounces) diced green chiles
- 1 cup grated cheese (try Monterey jack)

Directions:
1. Peel squash, cut in half and remove seeds. Cut the squash into ½ inch cubes.
2. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat (300 degrees F in an electric skillet). Add onions and stir for about 3 minutes. Stir in squash, salt and chili pepper.
3. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, for 10 to 12 minutes. Stir in chiles and cook about 3 minutes.
4. Sprinkle with cheese and cover until it melts, about 2 minutes. Serve hot.
5. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Makes 7 cups
Prep time: 30 minutes
Cooking time: 30 minutes

Kids Can Help Roast Squash Seeds:
- Rinse seeds in a colander under hot water.
- Separate seeds from stringy fibers.
- Find roasting directions on front page.

Kids Can!