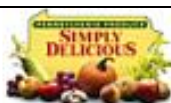


# Winter Squash

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## What's So Great about Winter Squash?

### What is beta-carotene?

Beta-carotene is an antioxidant and a part of the carotenoid vitamin family. Carotenoids are found in brightly colored fruits and vegetables. The brighter the color of a fruit or vegetable, the higher the beta-carotene content. Our bodies use beta-carotene to make vitamin A, a nutrient important for vision, immune function, and skin and bone health. Winter squash is a good source of beta-carotene.

Winter squash are good to excellent sources of Vitamin A, beta-carotene, potassium, vitamin C and fiber.

Winter squash also contains niacin, folate, and iron.

Winter squash is low in calories. It is fat free and cholesterol free.

Each type varies in texture, aroma and flavor. Winter squash can be prepared with sweet or savory flavors.

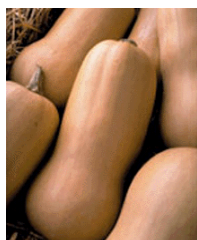
Winter squash goes well with meats, fruits, and other vegetables.

## Selecting and Storing Winter Squash

Winter squash is harvested when fully mature in September and October. It is widely available until late winter.

### Look for:

- A hard, tough rind with the stem attached.
- Squash that is heavy for its size (meaning a thick wall and plenty of edible flesh).



**Avoid:** Squash with cuts, punctures, sunken spots, or moldy spots on the rind. These are signs of decay. A tender rind means that the squash is not ripe. Unripe squash lacks flavor.



Picture courtesy of [www.umassvegetable.org](http://www.umassvegetable.org)

### Storage

Winter squash can keep for up to three months if stored in a cool dry place. Squash stores best with part of the stem still attached to help retain its moisture.

- Once cut open, store squash wrapped in plastic in the refrigerator for 4 to 5 days.
- Cooked squash can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for 4 to 5 days.
- Frozen cooked squash stays fresh for up to a year.







## Varieties of Winter Squash

### Did You Know?

Winter squash is different from summer squash. Winter squash is harvested and eaten at the mature stage. This is when its skin becomes a tough rind.



Many varieties of winter squash are grown in Pennsylvania. Winter squash varies in size from small acorn squash to pumpkins that reach up to 200 pounds. Flavor differs widely from very mild to very sweet.

<b>Acorn</b>	<u><b>Appearance:</b></u> Dark green, hard skin <u><b>Flesh:</b></u> Firm, yellow-orange flesh <u><b>Flavor:</b></u> Sweet flavor <u><b>Key Nutrients:</b></u> Good source of potassium, but not as high in Vitamin A as other varieties	
<b>Butternut</b>	<u><b>Appearance:</b></u> Beige-tan skin that is not as hard as acorn squash <u><b>Flesh:</b></u> Orange flesh <u><b>Flavor:</b></u> Mildly sweet flavor <u><b>Key Nutrients:</b></u> Excellent source of beta-carotene and Vitamin A	
<b>Delicata</b>	<u><b>Appearance:</b></u> Long cylindrical shape; cream color with dark green stripes <u><b>Flesh:</b></u> A creamy pulp that tastes a bit like sweet potatoes <u><b>Flavor:</b></u> Very sweet <u><b>Key Nutrients:</b></u> Contains Vitamin A	
<b>Hubbard</b>	<u><b>Appearance:</b></u> Plump in the middle and slightly tapered at the neck. Their bumpy skin varies in color from dark green to light blue to orange <u><b>Flesh:</b></u> Because of its fine-grained texture, the yellow-orange flesh is often mashed or pureed <u><b>Flavor:</b></u> Mild flavor <u><b>Key Nutrients:</b></u> Excellent source of Vitamin A, good source of potassium	
<b>Pumpkin</b>	<u><b>Appearance:</b></u> Orange skin. Their size ranges from very small to very large <u><b>Flesh:</b></u> Orange flesh <u><b>Flavor:</b></u> Sweet mild flavor <u><b>Key Nutrients:</b></u> Excellent source of beta-carotene and vitamin A	
<b>Spaghetti</b>	<u><b>Appearance:</b></u> Bright yellow skin <u><b>Flesh:</b></u> Golden yellow flesh with a crisp texture <u><b>Flavor:</b></u> Mild nutlike flavor <u><b>Key Nutrients:</b></u> Not as high in Vitamin A and beta-carotene as other varieties <u><b>Note:</b></u> This type does not keep as long as other winter squash	

## Preparation Tips

### The rind of winter squash is hard

The rind can be difficult to peel. Try cooking squash unpeeled, and then scoop out the flesh.

### If the rind is too hard to cut...

Pierce the squash. Microwave it for a few minutes until the squash is soft. Then finish cooking the squash.

### Do you like foods sweet or savory?

Winter squash is a versatile food that can be prepared either way. Not sure which sounds best? Try one of the following recipes, and discover your favorite way to eat winter squash.

### Nutrition Facts

1 cup cooked Butternut Squash

#### Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup, cubes (205g)  
Servings Per Container 1

Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 82	Calories from Fat 2
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	0%
<b>Sodium</b> 8mg	0%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 22g	7%
Dietary Fiber	0%
Sugars 4g	
<b>Protein</b> 2g	
<b>Vitamin A</b> 457%	<b>Vitamin C</b> 52%
Calcium 8%	Iron 7%

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.  
Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

NutritionData.com

**Baking:** This method brings out the sweetness in winter squash. Baking also saves the beta-carotene content. To bake, halve small squash lengthwise. Then scoop out the seeds and strings. Cut large squash into serving-sized pieces. Place the squash, cut-side down, in a foil-lined baking pan. The foil will help avoid sugary juices may burning onto the pan. Pour about 1/4" of water into the pan, cover with foil, and bake in a 350°F to 400°F oven until the squash is tender when pierced with a knife or toothpick. Cooking time for squash halves will be 40 to 45 minutes. Cut-up squash will take 15 to 25 minutes.



**Boiling:** This method is faster than steaming. Boiling can dilute the flavor of the squash and cause some nutrient loss. Place peeled squash pieces in a small amount of boiling water. Cook until the squash is tender. Drain well. Cooking times is 5 minutes.

**Sautéing:** Grate, peel or dice squash. Sauté in broth, or in a mix of broth and oil until desired tenderness. Tip: Grated squash is best if it is cooked just to the point where it is still slightly crunchy. Cooking time is 8 to 15 minutes.

**Steaming:** Place a metal colander or basket over a pot with about an inch of water in it. Place seeded squash halves or squash pieces in the colander cut-side down. Cover the pot. Cook over boiling water until tender. Cooking time is 15 to 20 minutes.



**Microwaving:** Arrange squash halves, cut-side up, in a shallow microwavable dish. Cover, and cook until tender. Let the squash stand for 5 minutes after cooking. Cooking time for squash halves is 7 to 10 minutes. Cooking time for chunks is 6 to 8 minutes.

**Puréeing:** All squash varieties can be puréed. Cook squash using the methods above. Then place cooked squash in a blender. If you don't have a blender, you can mash the squash. Puréed squash can be used in recipes for baked goods, soups, custards, or as a side dish in place of potatoes.



**Freezing:** Cooked squash freezes well. Pack into freezer containers or freezer bags leaving 1/2 inch head space. Frozen squash stays fresh for up to one year.

## Fitting Winter Squash into MyPyramid



The **green** triangle of MyPyramid is the vegetable section. Vegetables may be raw or cooked; fresh, frozen, or canned. Age, gender, and level of physical activity determine the daily vegetable need. For a 2000 calorie diet, it is recommended having about 2 ½ cups of vegetables daily.

On MyPyramid, winter squash is an **orange** vegetable. For a 2000 calorie diet, it is recommended having about 2 cups of orange vegetables per week. For more information on vegetable serving sizes visit [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov).

# Recipe Collection

## Nutrient Data

2 cups Squash Soup

### Nutrition Facts

Serving Size (440g)  
Servings Per Container

Amount Per Serving

Calories 160 Calories from Fat 35

% Daily Value\*

Total Fat 4.0g 6%

Saturated Fat 1.0g 5%

Cholesterol 5mg 2%

Sodium 120mg 5%

Total Carbohydrate 28g 9%

Dietary Fiber 7g 28%

Sugars 17g

Protein 6g

Vitamin A 200% • Vitamin C 50%

Calcium 8% • Iron 10%

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less Than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less Than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less Than	300mg	300 mg
Sodium	Less Than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:  
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

## Savory Squash Soup

Serves 6

### Ingredients:

- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 2 chopped onions
- 2 chopped carrots
- 2 minced garlic cloves
- 1 cup canned tomato puree
- 5 cups chicken or vegetable broth
- 4 cups cooked winter squash
- 1 ½ Tablespoon dried oregano
- 1 ½ Tablespoon dried basil

## Instructions:

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

Estimated Cost:

Per Recipe: \$ 4.42

Per Serving: \$ 0.74

## Nutrient Data

½ Acorn Squash

### Nutrition Facts

Serving Size (239g)  
Servings Per Container

Amount Per Serving

Calories 160 Calories from Fat 35

% Daily Value\*

Total Fat 4.0g 6%

Saturated Fat 2.0g 10%

Cholesterol 10mg 3%

Sodium 35mg 1%

Total Carbohydrate 34g 11%

Dietary Fiber 3g 12%

Sugars 16g

Protein 2g

Vitamin A 20% • Vitamin C 40%

Calcium 8% • Iron 8%

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less Than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less Than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less Than	300mg	300 mg
Sodium	Less Than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:  
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

## Honey Acorn Squash

Serves 6

### Ingredients

- 3 acorn squash
- 2 Tablespoons orange juice
- 1/4 cup honey
- 2 cups butter or margarine
- 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg (optional)

Estimated Cost:

Per Recipe: \$ 3.07

Per Serving: \$ 0.51

## Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Cut squash in half. Remove seeds and place halves in shallow baking pan.
3. Combine orange juice and honey. Mix well. Put some of the orange juice/honey mixture in each squash cavity.
4. Add 1 teaspoon of the margarine to each squash half. Sprinkle with nutmeg, if desired.
5. Cover pan with aluminum foil to keep steam in.
6. Bake 30 minutes. Remove foil and continue baking 30 minutes more, or until squash is tender.

Options: Substitute any other winter squash for the acorn squash. Cooking time could vary depending on the type of squash used.





## Nutrient Data

1/2 cup Casserole

### Nutrition Facts

Serving Size (80g)

Servings Per Container

Amount Per Serving

Calories 40      Calories from Fat 5

% Daily Value\*

Total Fat 0g      0%

Saturated Fat 0g      0%

Cholesterol 0mg      0%

Sodium 0mg      0%

Total Carbohydrate 9g      3%

Dietary Fiber 2g      8%

Sugars 5g

Protein 1g

Vitamin A 40%      • Vitamin C 15%

Calcium 2%      • Iron 2%

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:

Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

## Fall Casserole

Serves 8

### Ingredients

2 1/2 cups winter squash, such as acorn, butternut or hubbard

1 1/2 cups cooking apples, such as Macintosh, Granny Smith or Rome

1/2 teaspoon nutmeg

1 teaspoon cinnamon

### Instructions

1. Wash and prepare squash and apples (for extra fiber, keep peel on apples).
2. Alternate layers of squash and apples in 8x8 inch pan; end with apples.
3. Sprinkle spices over top layer.
4. Cover with aluminum foil.
5. Bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 45-60 minutes, until squash is tender.

Estimated Cost:

Per Recipe: \$ 0.76

Per Serving: \$ 0.13



## Grow Your Own Winter Squash

Plant winter squash in the spring. It grows all summer and should be picked at the mature stage in early autumn before the first frost.

Squash plants are either “vine” or “bush” types.

- For “vine” types, plant seeds one inch deep. Allow plenty of space for these plants to grow, about 7 to 12 feet between rows.
- For “bush” types, allow about 5 feet between rows.

Squash plants require minimal care after the vines cover the ground. Keep plants free from weeds.

Winter squash can be picked when the squash have turned a deep, solid color and the rind is hard. Pick the main part of the crop in September or October, before heavy frosts hits. Cut the squash with two inches of stem remaining. A stem cut too short is like an open wound, which will cause early decay. If picked too early, the squash will lack flavor.

For more information, contact your local Cooperative Extension Educator in the phone book or at <http://www.extension.psu.edu/>



## Activity Alley

## Winter Squash Word Search



**Directions:** There are hundreds of varieties of winter squash. Below some common winter squash varieties are listed. Try to find them in the puzzle below.

T H B S S X L C D A U N A V Z A E W A O  
O U A J L G M Q Q Q K Q A N Q W M Z T A  
V B N K P R H Y R D U G G B N J A J S Y  
Y B N R Z D Q W Y J U L Y I R B V U E B  
O A D Q E I Z F V V H M A D A U X M Q B  
H R T Y T T D I U C N Z P L F F T V D W  
X D Y E N W T A N I R G A L Q B S B D Z  
C P E O V D Y U Q T O C O Q I S Q V B A  
H W M M Y J Z B B T C E W D W N X H G U  
S Y H E O D K A N E A Y G W B K G T R S  
H U T H K Y A L H H R B E C O V Y T X E  
W H Q G C O H G O G B I M X E W P S K H  
D Z F M G T P Q C A U D T E M M V Y M U  
B W E O K U A E O P W Q N C S Z H P D K  
I B G O M F G G G S Q T N Z U O S E G N  
H M V P P U C R E T T U B P S H B X B T  
N E K J P T M U Q D E M H F E F K G F W  
I I Y T K I M X Y A T M G G Q F H C L Z  
N Z N W U L R B D E L I C A T A Q W U S  
A N A N A B T O V T P H D K W X D H B C

Acorn	Butternut	Dimpling	Spaghetti
Banana	Calabaza	Hubbard	Sweet
Buttercup	Delicata	Pumpkin	Turban

## Winter Squash Coloring Activity

### Roasting Pumpkin Seeds

Pumpkin seeds are a source of protein, fiber and iron. If you carve a Jack-o-Lantern, try roasting pumpkin seeds for a healthy snack.

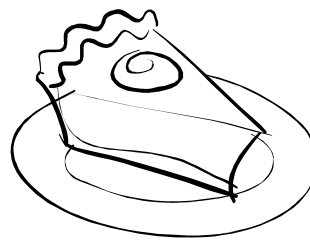
#### Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Place clean pumpkin seeds on a cookie sheet. Roast plain or with seasonings. Cinnamon, salt, or Cajon seasonings work well. Bake for 5 to 10 minutes or until golden brown.

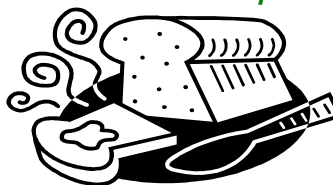
**Directions:** Pumpkin is a common winter squash. Not all pumpkins should be eaten. Below are some ways that pumpkins are used. Color the pictures below and circle the pumpkin foods that are good to eat.



Jack-o-Lantern



Pumpkin Pie



Pumpkin Bread