



Winter Squash

Growing & Harvest Info

After the last frost is over, you can plant seeds directly into the ground. Choose a sunny and well-drained spot. Plant seeds 1 inch deep into hills and water well. Sow seeds 6 to 12 inches apart.

Harvest winter squash whenever the fruits have turned a deep, solid color and the rind is hard. Harvest the main part of the crop in September or October to avoid harm from heavy frost.

Cut squash from the vines carefully, leaving two inches of stem attached if possible. Avoid cuts and bruises when handling. Fruits that are not fully mature, have been injured, have had their stems knocked off, or have been exposed to heavy frost do not keep and should be used as soon as possible or be composted (watch for seedlings in the compost).

Introduction

Winter squash is a warm-season vegetable that grows in many different varieties; such as acorn, buttercup, butternut, delicata, hubbard, spaghetti, and sweet dumpling. Winter squash have many nutrients and are especially high in potassium, fiber, and vitamin A.

Preservation

Storage:

- If winter squash has been cured, it can be stored in a cool, dry area for up to 6 months (or 3 months for acorn and butternut). Cut pieces should be refrigerated.

Freezing:

- Cut squash in halves, cubes, or slices. Cook by roasting, steaming, or boiling.
- Remove skins and mash squash.
- When cool, pack squash into freezer containers with 1/2-inch headspace.
- Alternately, freeze in ice cube trays or muffin tins and then transfer to a container.

Canning:

- Cut the flesh into one-inch cubes - **Do not mash or puree to prevent bacteria survival.**
- Make sure to use a pressure canner and follow correct processing times. The National Center for Home Food Preservation is a good resource for instruction: https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_04/pumpkin_winter_squash.html

Nutritional Benefits

Winter Squash

Source	Rating
Vitamins	GOOD
Minerals	GOOD
Fiber	MODERATE

Vegetable state	Use by
Raw	6 months; 1 week if cut
Frozen	1 year
Canned	1 year



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Preparation

Recipe 1: Simple Mashed Butternut Squash

Ingredients

- 2 pounds butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 4 tablespoons butter
- Salt & pepper, to taste

Directions

- Heat oven to 350 degrees. Put squash cubes in a shallow, wide baking dish. Season with salt and pepper; toss with hands to coat. Pour water in, to a depth of about 1 inch. Dot surface with butter and cover dish tightly with foil.
- Bake, covered, until squash is tender, about 1 hour. Crush squash to a rough consistency with a potato masher or wooden spoon. Stir to incorporate cooking juices and check seasoning. May be prepared ahead and reheated.

Recipe 2: Easy Spaghetti Squash

Ingredients/Equipment

- 1 whole medium spaghetti squash
- Olive oil
- Salt + pepper
- Sharp, heavy chef's knife
- Rimmed baking sheet

Directions

- Heat oven to 375 degrees.
- Brush the inside of each half with 1 tsp olive oil each and sprinkle with coarse salt and freshly ground black pepper.
- Place cut sides down on a rimmed baking sheet and put sheet into the oven.
- Bake for about 40 minutes, or until you can easily pierce the squash with a fork.
- Let cool for about 15 minutes, or until squash is cool enough to handle. With a fork, scrape out the spaghetti-like strands and prepare as desired.

Winter squashes vary in their nutritional value but generally are a good source of antioxidants and have anti-inflammatory benefits.

Prepare Winter Squash Like This:

Baked	Roasted
Boiled	Slow-Cooked
Grilled	Mashed
Steamed	Microwaved

Try Winter Squash In:

Pasta
Casseroles
Soups
Stews
Salads
Pie