



Cafeteria Bites

Winter Squash



Acorn Squash



Spaghetti Squash



Butternut Squash



Carnival Squash

Did You Know

- Winter squash are harvested in the fall and can last into the winter if stored correctly.
- The skins are hard and usually not eaten, quite different from their summer squash cousins, such as zucchini.
- Gourds, cucumbers, and melons are all part of the Cucurbit family, but all have different origins. Squash and pumpkins are native to the Americas, while cucumbers originated in eastern Asia and melons in Africa or Persia.
- Squash is one of the oldest cultivated crops in the Western Hemisphere and was originally grown for its seeds. Seeds found in Mexico have been dated as 10,000 years old.
- To some Native American tribes, corn, beans, and squash are known as the "Three Sisters." These plants were grown together and were staples of many tribes in North America.

In the Garden

To grow winter squash you need considerable garden space and full sun. Start seedlings indoors 3-4 weeks prior to planned planting date. Plant hardened off seedlings outdoors one week before last frost or plant seeds directly in garden. Winter squash may be grown in larger containers, but the vines and squash may need to be trellised or supported as they grow outside of the container. Vines will begin to die off as the squash reaches harvest time.

Selection

Select winter squash that are firm, have dull-colored skin, and feel heavy for the size. Squash with cracks or brown or soft spots should be avoided. Part of the stem should be intact for optimal storage.

Storage

Winter squash can be stored from 1 week to 6 months depending on the variety and storage conditions. Store winter squash in a dark area, with good ventilation, between 50-60°F for ideal storage conditions. Remove soil prior to storage and leave stem on. Once the squash is cut, wrap and store in the refrigerator for 1-2 days.

Cooking

Bake. Peel and cube or slice squash in half and scoop out seeds. On a foil-lined baking dish, place halved squash cut-side down or evenly arrange cubed squash. Cover and bake whole squash at 350°F for 45 minutes or until tender. Bake cubed squash at 350°F for 20-25 minutes.

Boil or Steam. Keep whole or cut squash into quarters or cubes and remove the skin and seeds. To boil squash whole, pierce skin with fork, cover, and boil for 1 hour. To steam or boil cubed squash, place slices into pan of boiling water or steam basket for 10-15 minutes or until tender.

Microwave. Peel and cube squash or slice squash in half and remove seeds. Place cubes or halves in a microwave-safe dish with 2-3 tablespoons water. Microwave on high for 5-8 minutes for cubes or 8-12 minutes for halves. To soften thick or hard rinds before cutting or peeling, poke holes in rind with fork, and microwave for 2-5 minutes. Remove from microwave, and allow to rest for 1-2 minutes until cool enough to handle.

Preserve. For more information on preserving winter squash, read MontGuides Home-canning Pressures and Processing Times and Freezing Vegetables. Visit <https://nutrition.msuextension.org/> and click on the food preservation link or contact your Extension office to find the guide.

— Continued on page 4 —

Squish Squash Lasagna

HACCP Process: 1 – No Cook 2 – Cook & Same Day Serve 3 – Cook, Cool, Reheat, Serve 4 – SOP Controlled

Ingredients	50 Servings	100 Servings	Directions
Onions, diced	1 qt 3/4 cups	2 qt 1 1/2 cup	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To make tomato sauce, sauté onions and garlic in oil for 2-3 minutes. Add tomatoes, oregano, thyme, and basil. Simmer over low heat, uncovered, for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Place pasta sheets in hot water for 7-10 minutes. Remove sheets when dish is ready to be assembled. Assembly: Lightly coat steam table pan (12 in x 20 in x 2 1/2 in) with pan release spray. For 50 servings, use 2 pans. For 100 servings, use 4 pans. Spread ingredients evenly across each pan. First layer: a. 16 lasagna sheets, slightly overlapping approximately 1 in, b. 2 1/2 cups tomato sauce, c. about 2 1/2 cups spinach (4 oz), d. 2 lb 5 oz squash slightly overlapping (35 slices). Second layer: Repeat first layer. Third layer: 2 1/2 cups tomato sauce. Cover with foil and bake until squash is fork tender. Conventional oven: 350°F for 60-75 minutes. Convection oven: 350°F for 40-55 minutes. Remove from oven. Sprinkle 12 1/2 oz (3 cups) cheese evenly over each pan of lasagna. Bake uncovered until cheese starts to brown slightly. Conventional oven: 350°F for 15 minutes. Convection oven: 350°F for 10 minutes Critical Control Point: Heat to 140°F or higher for at least 15 seconds. Remove from oven and allow to set for 15 minutes before serving. Critical Control Point: Hold for hot service at 135°F or higher. Cut each pan 5 x 5 (25 pieces per pan).
Garlic, minced	1/4 cups 1 1/2 tsp	1/2 cup 1 Tbsp	
Canola oil	2 tsp	1 Tbsp 1 tsp	
Canned low-sodium diced tomatoes	3 qt (1 #10 can)	6 qt (2 #10 cans)	
Dried oregano	1 1/2 tsp	1 Tbsp	
Dried thyme	1 1/2 tsp	1 Tbsp	
Dried basil	1 1/2 tsp	1 Tbsp	
Whole wheat lasagna sheets, no boil, (128 sheets) 3 1/2 in x 7 in sheets	2 lb 6 1/4 oz (64 sheets)	4 lb 12 3/4 oz (128 sheets)	
Butternut squash, peeled, sliced 1/4 in	9 lb 4 oz	18 lb 8 oz	
Spinach, fresh, sliced 1/8 in	1 lb	2 lb	
Low-fat mozzarella cheese, low-moisture, part-skim, shredded	1 lb 9 oz	3 lb 2 oz	

Serving Size	1 piece		Pan Size	Steam table pan (12 in x 20 in x 2 1/2 in)		Yield	50, 100			
Oven Temperature & Baking Time:	Conventional	Temperature	350°F	Minutes	60-75 plus 15	Convection	Temperature	350°F	Minutes	40-55 plus 10

Meal Component Fulfillment (Based on Serving Size)

1 Serving Provides: .5 oz meat alternate 5/8 cup red/orange vegetable 1/8 cup other vegetable .75 oz grains

Nutrition Analysis : Serving Size: 1 piece					
137	Calories (kcal)	2.05	Saturated Fat (g)	1.65	Iron (mg)
6.69	Protein (g)	23.36%	Calories from Total Fat (%)	169.23	Calcium (mg)
21.32	Carbohydrate (g)	2433.48	Vitamin A (IU)	159.52	Sodium (mg)
3.55	Total Fat (g)	20	Vitamin C (mg)	3.79	Dietary Fiber (g)

Notes:

Source: Recipes for Healthy Kids Cookbook for Schools, USDA

Puree. Roast or bake squash. Scoop squash from skin and puree squash to a smooth consistency. It can be added to soup, breads, muffins, or custards.

Roast. Peel and cube squash. Place on baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil and low-sodium seasoning. Bake at 350°F for 45 minutes or until tender.

Roast Seeds. Remove seeds and rinse thoroughly to remove strings or parts of the squash. Drizzle with olive oil and low-sodium seasoning before placing evenly on a baking sheet. Cook at 300°F for 10-15 minutes. Stir periodically for even roasting.

Sauté. Peel and grate or cube squash. Heat pan to high, add butter or oil to coat bottom of pan and add squash. Sauté 15-25 minutes, or until tender.

Season. To enhance flavor, season with allspice, basil, cinnamon, cloves, ginger, marjoram, or nutmeg.

Adapted from the Winter Squash Food Fact Sheet developed by Montana State University Extension. For the full fact sheet and other resources, visit: <https://nutrition.msuextension.org/>.

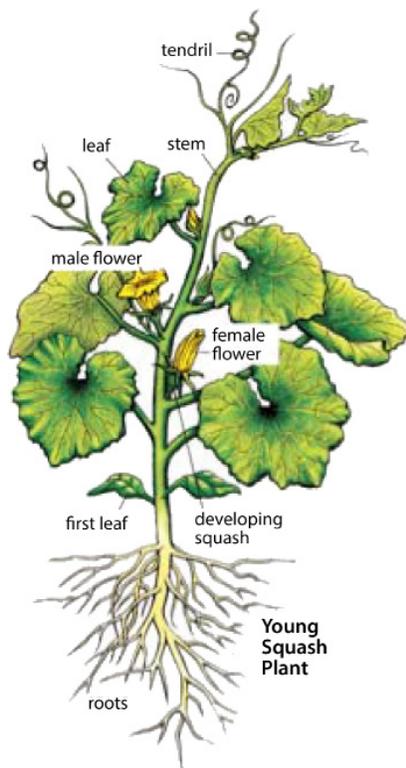
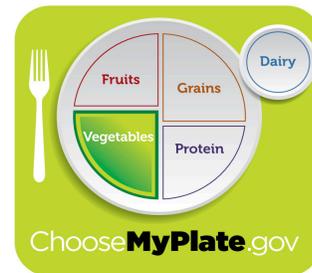
Nutrition Information

Winter squash are loaded with vitamins A and C and provide approximately the same amount of potassium as bananas! It is also a source of vitamin B₆, magnesium, iron, and calcium. Beta-carotene which is found in many orange colored vegetables, including winter squash, turns into vitamin A. Vitamin A helps maintain good vision and keeps skin healthy.

Dig Deeper

For sources and photo credits along with more recipes, lessons, quick activities, resources, and guides, visit:

mtharvestofthemonth.org.



4 Montana Harvest of the Month: Winter Squash



The Montana Harvest of the Month program showcases Montana grown foods in Montana schools and communities. This program is a collaboration between Montana Farm to School, Office of Public Instruction, Montana Team Nutrition Program, National Center for Appropriate Technology, Montana State University Extension, Gallatin Valley Farm to School, Montana Department of Agriculture, Montana Organic Association, and FoodCorps Montana. More information and resources are available at: mtharvestofthemonth.org

Funds were provided in part by a USDA Team Nutrition Training grant, a USDA Farm to School grant, Montana Healthcare Foundation, Northern Pulse Growers Association, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, and Montana School Nutrition Association. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. The Montana State University Extension Service is an ADA/EO/AA/Veteran's Preference Employer and Provider of Educational Outreach. This publication was supported by the Grants or Cooperative Agreements Numbers, 6 U58DP004818-03-01 & 5 U58DP004818-03-00, and funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the DPHHS.