

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.
- 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.
- 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.

Grow One of the Three Sisters

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. Plant squash near corn and beans to complete a "Three Sisters Garden."

Buying Tips

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. 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

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. Roast squash by peeling and cubing squash. Place on baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil and low-sodium seasoning. Bake at 350°F for 45 minutes or until tender. Add cubed roasted squash to pasta, pizza, or salads. Squash is also fantastic in chili!



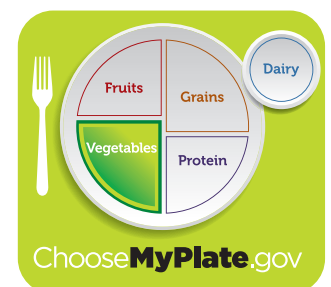
Conversation Starters

Winter squash skin is hard and you don't eat it. What other foods have skin that you don't eat? (watermelon, mango, banana, etc.)

- Q: When is a pumpkin not a pumpkin?
A: When you drop it ... then it's squash!
- Q: What did the orange squash say to the green squash?
A: Why orange you orange?

Dig Deeper

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



Roasted Butternut Squash

Servings

6

Ingredients



1 Butternut squash



2 Tbsp of olive oil



2 cloves garlic, minced



Salt and ground black pepper to taste

Optional: drizzle with honey, or sprinkle with dried rosemary, or create your own flavor combination.

Tools



Oven



Baking Sheet



Knife



Cutting Board

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Peel, seed, and cut butternut squash into 1/2-inch cubes. (You can substitute any type of winter squash for Butternut including Acorn, Buttercup, and Carnival.)
3. Toss butternut squash with olive oil and garlic in a large bowl. Season with salt and black pepper (and honey and rosemary or other seasons if using). Arrange coated squash on a baking sheet.
4. Roast in the preheated oven until squash is tender and lightly browned, stirring once, 25-30 minutes.



2 Montana Harvest of the Month: Winter Squash



The Montana Harvest of the Month program showcases Montana grown foods in Montana 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, FoodCorps Montana, and Montana Department of Agriculture. 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.