

WINTER SQUASH



WINTER SQUASH comes in many varieties including pumpkin, acorn, calabaza, spaghetti, and butternut. Though they are closely related to summer squash, winter squash have thicker, harder skin and more firm, fully-developed seeds. The first accounts of human cultivation of squash dates back 8000 years to the Andes mountains of South America. The peak season for winter squash in the Northeast is October through December.

STORAGE

- ◆ Winter squash will keep **1 to 2 months** stored in a **dry, dark, well ventilated** place.
- ◆ Once cut, wrap in plastic and store in the refrigerator. Cut squash will keep about a week.

PREPARATION

- ◆ Winter squash can be peeled, de-seeded, and cut into chunks or slices to **steam, sauté, or bake**.
- ◆ It is easier, however, to **bake winter squashes with their skin on**. Either cut in pieces and remove seeds or place whole squashes in a baking pan with 1/2 inch of water in the bottom. Bake at 375°F for around 45 minutes, depending on size. Unpeeled squash pieces can also be steamed. You can cover with aluminum foil to reduce cooking time.
- ◆ Once cooked, the flesh of winter squashes can be scooped from the skin and used to make **purees, soups, and pie fillings**.
- ◆ **Try baking chunks of butternut or calabaza squash with butter, cinnamon and honey.**

Nutritional Information

Winter squash is a good source of Vitamins A, C, and potassium. Vitamin A is important in vision, growth and development, skin health, immune function and reproduction. Vitamin C is important in immune response, wound healing, and allergic reactions. Vitamin C also helps with iron absorption. Diets containing foods that are a good source of potassium and that are low in sodium may reduce the risk of high blood pressure and stroke.

Winter Squash Recipes

Squash Potage

- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt, plus more to taste
- 1 Tablespoon fresh ginger, peeled and minced
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 3 cloves fresh garlic, peeled and left whole
- 6 sage leaves (1/2 teaspoon dry sage)
- 1/2 cup apple cider or more to taste
- 3 pounds winter squash, peeled, seeded and chopped
- 1/2 cup peeled, sliced carrots
- 4 cups water or soup stock
- Black pepper to taste



In a heavy, 3 quart sauce pan, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onions and 1 teaspoon of salt, cover and cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the ginger, cinnamon, garlic and sage and continue to cook for another 5 minutes. Stir in the apple cider and bring it to a boil. Add the squash, carrots and 4 cups of water or stock. Bring to a boil then lower the heat, cover and cook for 20 minutes or until the squash is falling apart. Remove the cinnamon stick, allow to cool then transfer to a blender or food processor. Blend until the mixture is creamy. Add additional cider and salt and some freshly ground black pepper to taste. Serve piping hot.

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Squash and Apple Bake

- Any winter squash, peeled, seeded and sliced
- 4 apples, cored and sliced
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 Tablespoon flour
- 1/4 cup soft butter or margarine
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon mace or nutmeg



Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Arrange the squash and apple slices in layers in a greased baking dish. In a bowl, combine the sugar, flour, butter or margarine, salt and mace or nutmeg and stir until the mixture becomes crumbly. Sprinkle the mixture on top. Bake for about an hour, or until tender.

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Sautéed Butternut Squash

- 3 Tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 butternut squash, washed, peeled, seeded and cut into 1 inch chunks
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Tablespoon chopped fresh sage
- 1 Tablespoon chopped fresh parsley



In a skillet, over medium low flame, heat oil. Add squash and garlic. Toss to coat with oil. Sauté slowly over low heat (avoid browning garlic), stirring frequently for about 30 minutes until the squash is golden and tender. (Add a tablespoon or 2 of water to the skillet if the squash begins to stick.) Add salt and pepper to taste and then sprinkle sage and parsley over the squash. Mix well and serve.

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