



# Winter Squash

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## **Nutrition and Health...**

Winter squash provides vitamins A and C and niacin. One ½-cup serving is only 65 calories.

## **Selection...**

In selecting winter squash, remember that a hard, tough rind indicates full maturity. Select squash that is heavy for its size. Slight variation in skin color does not influence flavor. Avoid squash with cuts, punctures and sunken or moldy spots on the rind as they indicate decay. A tender rind is a sign of immaturity and means poor eating quality in winter squash.

Varieties of winter squash include acorn, hubbard, butternut, spaghetti, kaboscha and pumpkin.

## **Storage...**

Store whole winter squash in a cool, dry, well-ventilated place. A temperature of 45° to 50°F is best. For storage up to several months, be sure squash is fully mature (has a hard shell) with the stem attached. Don't store bruised or damaged squash for long periods of time since they spoil quickly. If you have a number of them, they should be cured for 10 days at 80° to 85°F to harden the rinds and heal surface cuts for longer storage.

## **Preparation...**

To bake, cut into halves or serving pieces. Remove seeds and stringy parts. Place cut side down in a shallow baking dish. Add a small amount of water (about ¼ inch). Cook until almost tender, about 30–40 minutes at 400°F. Add more hot water if necessary. Turn pieces of cooked squash cut side up. Sprinkle with salad dressing, add seasonings and/or fill and continue baking until tender, about 20–25 minutes, depending on the size of pieces.

The skin is very hard, so it is better to cook whole until the skin softens. In a pressure pan, steam 5–10 minutes;

in boiling water, cook 20–30 minutes. Drain, pare and mash. Season with butter, salt, pepper and a trace of sugar.

## **Recipes**

Use your imagination and give squash that "distinctive flavor" your family likes. Try the following ideas, breaking the flesh with a fork when you add the seasonings.

- Sprinkle with salt (pepper optional).
- Add ham, bacon or sausage drippings; butter or margarine.
- Sprinkle on a mixture of cinnamon, allspice, butter, honey, raisins and/or nuts.
- Add marshmallows (miniature or cut up) and cranberry sauce with a dash of nutmeg in baked shells during the last 20 minutes of cooking.
- Mash with cream and nutmeg or candied ginger, or orange juice and grated orange rind.
- Fry sausage patties until three fourths done and then place in each baked squash half. Continue baking until tender.
- Try placing a small onion, brushed with butter, under each squash half and bake. When tender, turn cut side of squash up. Mash slightly with fork, place onion in center and surround with cooked link sausage. Brush with butter, sprinkle with paprika and bake 10 more minutes.
- Try scalloped squash. Peel and slice squash. Place in greased baking dish in alternate layers with tart apple slices. Top with soft, buttered breadcrumbs. Bake at 375°F until tender (about 45 minutes).

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