

Vegetable of the Month

Winter Squash



Nutrition Facts

Serving Size (431g)
Servings Per Container

Amount Per Serving

Calories 170 **Calories from Fat** 5
% Daily Value*

Total Fat 0g **0%**

Saturated Fat 0g **0%**

Cholesterol 0mg **0%**

Sodium 15mg **1%**

Total Carbohydrate 45g **15%**

Dietary Fiber 6g **24%**

Sugars 10g

Protein 3g

Vitamin A 30% • Vitamin C 80%

Calcium 15% • Iron 15%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

		Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g	
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g	
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg	
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg	
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g	
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g	

Calories per gram:

Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

Winter squash comes in many varieties and sizes. Unlike its summer counterparts, winter squash is harvested at a mature age, which makes the skin hard and inedible. The skin, however, is protective and increases its storage life. Winter squash can be stored for 3 months or longer.

The yellow and orange flesh of the winter squash is more nutritious and richer in complex carbohydrates, such as beta carotene, than summer squash. Winter squash is always served cooked and, because of its tough skin, only the inside flesh is eaten.

Acorn squash

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size (140g)
Servings Per Container

Amount Per Serving

Calories 60 **Calories from Fat 0**

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 0g **0%**

Saturated Fat 0g **0%**

Cholesterol 0mg **0%**

Sodium 5mg **0%**

Total Carbohydrate 16g **5%**

Dietary Fiber 5g **20%**

Sugars 4g

Protein 1g

Vitamin A 220% • Vitamin C 50%

Calcium 6% • Iron 6%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

		Calories: 2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:

Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

Butternut squash

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size (100g)
Servings Per Container

Amount Per Serving

Calories 40 **Calories from Fat 5**

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 0g **0%**

Saturated Fat 0g **0%**

Cholesterol 0mg **0%**

Sodium 5mg **0%**

Total Carbohydrate 9g **3%**

Dietary Fiber 3g **12%**

Sugars 2g

Protein 2g

Vitamin A 110% • Vitamin C 20%

Calcium 2% • Iron 2%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

		Calories: 2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:

Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

Hubbard squash

*Note serving size differences; a 5 A Day serving is 1/2 cup of cooked squash. Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Selection

Winter squash comes in many sizes. Pick a size based on your cooking needs. For a quality squash, choose one that has a smooth, dry rind and is free of cracks or soft spots. Skin that is easily nicked or scraped with a fingernail means that the squash did not reach maturity. Look for rind that has a dull appearance. A shiny rind indicates that it has been picked too early or has a wax coating, which masks the skin and makes it inedible when cooked. Choose squash that has a deep color and is heavy for its size. It is also best to choose squash with a firm, rounded, dry stem. Squash with no stem permits bacteria to enter.

Cut pieces can be found in the grocery market. Choose pieces that have a good interior color and finely-grained flesh that is not fibrous. Ideal flesh should be barely moist, but not too dry or too watery.

Storage

Winter squash has a long shelf life and can be stored for up to 3 months or longer in a cool, dry place between 55° and 60°F. A higher temperature will shorten storage time, but it will not alter the flavor. Storage temperatures below 50°F (as in a refrigerator) will cause squash to spoil more rapidly. If the squash needs to be refrigerated, it can be stored for 1 to 2 weeks. Cut pieces of squash should be tightly wrapped and refrigerated. Cooked, pureed squash can be frozen for use later as a side dish or to thicken, color, or flavor soups, sauces, or stews.

Varieties



Acorn

This acorn-shaped squash is one of the most widely available among the small winter squash. It measures about 6 inches around and weighs 1 to 2 pounds. Acorn squash is a good source of calcium. Baking is an excellent way to bring out the flavors of this squash.



Banana

This squash comes in three varieties: blue, orange, and pink. Among the three varieties, the pink banana is the most common in the United States. It is grown commercially in Florida. This large, thick-skinned cylindrical squash averages 20 inches long and weighs around 12 pounds. It is so large that it is usually sold in chunks instead of whole. Its creamy textured orange flesh offers a fruity and buttery delight to your palate. Although both baking and steaming are great ways to prepare this tasty squash, steaming produces a slightly sweeter, yet mild flavor.



Buttercup

This stocky squash is 6 to 8 inches in diameter, averaging 2 to 4 pounds. Its popularity stems from its sweet and creamy orange flesh. Its shortcoming is that it tends to be a bit dry. Baking or steaming can solve this problem; the dry flesh becomes smooth and tastes similar to a mixture of honey, roasted chestnuts, and sweet potato. Even more than baking, steaming softens the flesh and creates a thick puree.



Butternut

This elongated bell-shaped squash measures about a foot long and weighs an average of 2 to 4 pounds. Its popularity is due to its meaty, yet moderately sweet golden orange flesh. Because of its thin skin, this squash can easily be skinned with a vegetable peeler, which makes it easy to cut and prepare. Baking enhances its sweet, moist, and nutty flavors. Butternut squash is usually available from August through March.



Hubbard

This tear-shaped squash comes in several varieties: green (true), golden, blue, and baby blue. It ranges from dark green to orange and weighs from 5 to 50 pounds. Because of its size, hubbard's popularity has decreased over the years. However, pre-cut portions of green and orange hubbard can be found in markets. Green hubbards are thick, sweet, and dry. Golden hubbards—a smaller squash than the green or blue—are fairly sweet, but have a bitter aftertaste.



Spaghetti

This oval-shaped yellow squash is also called the vegetable spaghetti. It averages 9 inches in length and may weigh 2 to 3 pounds. When cooked, the crisp, tender, spaghetti-like strands yield a mild lightly sweet and fresh taste. Keep in mind that the larger the vegetable, the thicker the strands and the more flavorful the taste.



Sweet Dumpling

This solid round squash, formerly known as the vegetable gourd, is a perfect serving for one person. It is about the size of an apple and weighs up to 1 pound. The skin is a warm cream color striped with ivy green, and it changes to butter color and orange during storage. The skin is relatively tender and can be eaten. The pale-yellow flesh is smooth, fine, and dry as a potato and produces a rich starchy, light to mild sweetness, with a slight corn flavor.

Photos courtesy of Cook's Thesaurus

Preparation

Baking

This popular cooking method brings out the sweet flavor of the squash by caramelizing some of the sugars. It also is the best process to conserve the beta carotene nutrients. Cut squash lengthwise in half and remove the seeds and strings. Large squash can also be cut into serving-size pieces if preferred. Place squash, cut-side down in a baking pan lined with foil. Pour 1/4 inch of water in the pan, cover with foil, and bake at 350°F to 400°F. Bake halved squash for 40 to 45 minutes and cut pieces for 15 to 20 minutes or until tender.

Boiling

This technique is a faster method of cooking, but it dilutes the flavor slightly. Peel squash and cut it into pieces. Place pieces in a small amount of boiling water, and cook approximately 5 minutes or until tender. Drain well.

Microwaving

Prepare squash by cutting it in half lengthwise or in large chunks. Place squash cut-side down in a microwavable dish, cover, and cook until tender. Halved pieces usually cook in 7 to 10 minutes and large chunks in 8 minutes.

Sautéing

Using a nonstick pan, sauté grated, peeled, or diced squash in a broth. Sautéing gives the squash, especially if grated, a slightly crunchy texture. Cooking time usually lasts 8 to 10 minutes.

Steaming

Halve squash lengthwise and place cut-side down in a vegetable steamer. Cook over boiling water for 15 to 20 minutes or until the flesh becomes tender. Squash can also be peeled and cut into chunks or slices for steaming.

Make Winter Squash Part of Your 5 A Day Plan



- Substitute any variety of cooked, mashed squash for canned pumpkin in soup, pie, cookie, or bread recipes.
- Mash cooked squash with sautéed onion or garlic and herbs for a savory side dish.
- Bake squash halves with a savory vegetable and breadcrumb filling.
- Use pureed squash as a side dish or add to soup, sauce, or stews for thickening, color, and flavor.

Recipes

Creamy Butternut Squash Soup

Makes 8 servings

Each serving equals one and one-third 5 A Day servings

2 lbs butternut squash, peeled and cut into chunks

4 cups low-sodium, low-fat vegetable broth

1 1/4 cup non-fat sour cream

2 Tbsp butter

salt and freshly ground black pepper

1/4 tsp cayenne, or to taste

1 cup mushrooms, sliced

1/4 cup chives, cut into 1-inch pieces

Combine the squash and vegetable broth in a saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium, and simmer for about 20 minutes or until the squash is very tender.

Let cool, and then puree the mixture in a blender. (You may prepare the recipe in advance up to this point; you can keep the mixture refrigerated in a covered container for up to 2 days.)

Return the puree to the saucepan and turn the heat to medium-low. Stir in the non-fat sour cream along with the butter, cayenne, and salt and pepper to taste. Cook and stir until heated through; (do not boil). Then taste and season, if necessary. Keep warm over low heat.

Meanwhile, heat skillet over moderately high heat until very hot. Spray with cooking spray, then sauté mushrooms, stirring, until golden brown, about 5 minutes.

Serve the soup with sautéed mushrooms and chives.

Nutritional analysis per serving: calories 152, protein 6g, fat 4g, percent calories from fat 24%, cholesterol 11mg, carbohydrates 25g, fiber 2g, sodium 174mg

Baked Butternut Squash

Makes 2 servings

Each serving equals four 5 A Day servings

1 butternut squash (approximately 2 lbs)

1 Tbsp brown sugar

1 tsp butter

salt and pepper

Cut squash in half and remove seeds. Place in baking dish cut side down in about 1 inch of water. Bake at 350°F for 40 minutes or until tender.

Remove from oven, and fill each cavity with brown sugar, butter, and salt and pepper to taste. Continue to bake for 10 minutes.

Variation: substitute other varieties of squash such as acorn squash or Hubbard squash.

Nutritional analysis per serving: calories 281, protein 4g, fat 6g, percent calories from fat 18%, cholesterol 15mg, carbohydrates 59g, fiber 0g, sodium 21mg

Winter Squash and Kale Risotto with Pine Nuts

Makes 4 servings

Each serving is equal to two and one-fourth 5 A Day servings

Source: National Cancer Institute

2 tsp olive oil

1 cup yellow onion, diced

3 cloves garlic, minced

1 cup of Arborio or short-grained rice

2 Tbsp pine nuts

2 (10 oz) cans of low-sodium, fat-free vegetable broth

1 (12 oz) package of frozen winter squash, thawed slightly and diced

2 cups fresh kale, finely chopped

Heat oil in a large, shallow saucepan over medium heat. Add salt, onion and garlic, and sauté 2 minutes.

Stir in rice and pine nuts and toast for about 2 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup broth; cook on medium-low heat, stirring often, until liquid is nearly absorbed. Add remaining first can of broth, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup at a time, stirring often until each addition is nearly absorbed before adding the next.

Add diced squash, and from the second can, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of broth. Stirring often. Add remaining broth, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup at a time as before. Along with the last $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of broth, add the kale. Cook mixture until all broth is absorbed and kale is soft and bright green.

Nutritional analysis per serving: calories 336, protein 8g, fat 6g, percent calories from fat 16%, cholesterol 0mg, carbohydrates 62g, fiber 6g, sodium 195mg

Savory Stuffed Sweet Dumplings

Makes 4 servings

Each serving is equal to three and a half 5 A Day servings

2 sweet dumpling squash (approximately 24 ozs)	1/4 tsp freshly ground black pepper
1/2 cup long-grain brown rice	1/2 tsp dried thyme leaves
1 1/4 cup water	1/2 tsp dried marjoram
2 cups tomatoes, chopped	1 1/2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 cup onion, chopped	1/2 cup raw pine nuts, toasted
1 cup green bell pepper, chopped	salt to taste

Cut squashes in half lengthwise (from stem to blossom end). Scoop out seeds, and place the squash cut side down on a baking sheet covered with aluminum foil, shiny side down. Bake at 400°F for 40 minutes.

While squashes are baking, combine rice, water, and salt in a 2-quart saucepan. Cover and bring to a boil over high heat. Turn heat down to low and steam 35 to 45 minutes until tender.

Combine tomatoes, onion, bell pepper, black pepper, herbs, and olive oil in a large skillet. Sauté over high heat until onions are softened and transparent, about 5 to 7 minutes.

When rice is cooked, add to ingredients in skillet along with pine nuts and mix well. Season to taste.

Stuff squash cavities. Spread the remainder of the stuffing onto the bottom of a lightly oiled 7" x 9" baking pan. Lay squashes on top of stuffing. Cover baking dish with aluminum foil, shiny side down. Bake at 350°F for 25 to 30 minutes.

Nutritional analysis per serving: calories 325, protein 8g, fat 9g, percent calories from fat 25%, cholesterol 0mg, carbohydrates 54g, fiber 5g, sodium 17mg

Spaghetti Squash Primavera

Makes 6 servings

Each serving is equal to one 5 A Day serving

1 cup tomatoes, finely chopped
1 cup diced cucumbers
1/2 cup fresh chopped parsley
1/2 cup finely chopped fresh basil
1/2 cup diced red onions
1 Tbsp salad oil
juice of 1 lemon
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 spaghetti squash (about 3 lbs)
4 quarts boiling water
dash of salt and freshly ground pepper

Place tomatoes, cucumbers, parsley, basil and onions in a large bowl. Combine the oil, lemon juice and garlic and pour over vegetables. Mix well and set aside to marinate.

Place spaghetti squash in boiling water and cook 15 minutes. Prick in four places with a fork and continue cooking another 30 minutes. Remove squash. Let cool for 5 minutes, then cut in half lengthwise and scoop out seeds. Using a fork, pull out the strands of "spaghetti." Mix with the well-marinated vegetables. Season with salt and pepper.

Nutritional analysis per serving: calories 106, protein 2g, fat 3g, percent calories from fat 24%, cholesterol 0mg, carbohydrates 19g, fiber 0g, sodium 42mg

Grilled Winter Squash

Makes 4 servings

Each serving equals two 5 A Day servings

2 lbs banana squash or butternut squash

2 Tbsp apple juice

2 Tbsp melted butter

2 squash cut into 4 pieces

Discard seeds. Place squash in microwavable baking dish. Cover with vented plastic wrap. Microwave on HIGH 3 to 5 minutes. Turn squash. Continue cooking for another 2 minutes. Discard plastic wrap. Pierce flesh of squash with fork at 1-inch intervals. Place squash in foil pan.

Combine apple juice and butter; brush over squash. Sprinkle with sugar. Grill squash on covered barbeque grill for 20 to 30 minutes until squash is tender.

Nutritional analysis per serving: calories 180, protein 2g, fat 6g, percent calories from fat 28%, cholesterol 15mg, carbohydrates 15g, fiber 0g, sodium 12mg

Winter Vegetable Stew

Makes 6 servings

Each serving equals three 5 A Day servings

1 cup onions, cut into 1/2 inch wedges
1 sweet potato
2 carrots
1 lb banana or Hubbard squash
1 cup parsnips
2 cloves garlic
1 red bell pepper
2 cups low sodium, low-fat vegetable broth
1 cup tomato, puréed
2 Tbsp lime juice
1/4 tsp cayenne
1 (10 oz) package frozen peas
Salt and pepper
1 bunch cilantro sprigs, rinsed, or thinly sliced green onions

Peel onions and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-thick wedges. Peel the sweet potato, carrots, squash, and parsnips; cut into $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch pieces. Peel and mince or press garlic. Rinse bell pepper; stem, seed, and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch strips.

Cook onions, sweet potato, carrots, squash, parsnips, garlic, and 1 cup of broth in a covered pan for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add a few Tbsp of water if mixture begins sticking to pan.

Add 1 more cup of broth, along with the bell pepper, tomato sauce, lime juice, and cayenne to taste. Return to a boil, and then reduce heat. Simmer covered until vegetables are tender when pierced, about 12 to 15 minutes. If stew sticks to pan or gets thicker than desired, add more broth as needed.

Add peas and stir occasionally until hot, about 2 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste. Ladle into soup bowls, and garnish with cilantro or sliced green onions.

Nutritional analysis per serving: calories 160, protein 6g, fat 1g, percent calories from fat 5%, cholesterol 0mg, carbohydrates 33g, fiber 7g, sodium 114mg

Baked Acorn Squash with Pineapple

Makes 6 servings

Each serving equals one and two-thirds 5 A Day servings

1 large acorn squash (approximately 32 oz)

2 tsp ground cinnamon

1 cup crushed pineapple, drained

1 tsp ground nutmeg

1/2 tsp ground allspice

1/2 tsp ground ginger

Preheat oven to 350°F. Cut the squash in half and remove the seeds. Place each half, cut side down, in a baking dish. Cover dish and bake for 45 to 60 minutes until squash is soft and tender.

Meanwhile, combine the cinnamon, pineapple, nutmeg, allspice, and ginger. When squash is cooked, remove from oven. Let it cool for 10 minutes.

Scoop out the pulp from both halves and combine with the pineapple mixture. Replace mixture into shells and return to the oven and bake for 7 minutes until pineapple mixture is hot and bubbly.

Nutritional analysis per serving: calories 50, protein 0g, fat 0g, percent calories from fat 0%, cholesterol 0mg, carbohydrates 13g, fiber 1g, sodium 3mg