

Squash Information

Squash Equivalents:

1/3 to 1/2 pound raw unpeeled squash = 1 serving

1 pound peeled squash = 1 cup cooked, mashed

2-1/2 pounds whole squash = 2-3/4 to 3 cups pureed

1 pound trimmed squash = 2 cups cooked pieces

1 pound squash = 2 to 3 servings

12 ounces frozen squash = 1-1/2 cups

1 medium-size (15 to 20 pounds) pumpkin = 5 to 7 quarts of cooked pumpkin.

Purchasing and/or Choosing Squash:

Winter Squash:

Winter squash matures on the vine and develops an inedible, thick, hard rind and tough seeds. Choose firm, well-shaped squash that are heavy for their size and have a hard, tough skin.

Do not choose those that have sunken or moldy spots. Avoid squash with cuts or punctures in the skin. Also, slight variations in skin color do not affect flavor. A tender rind indicates immaturity, which is a sign of poor quality in winter squash varieties.

To Store Winter Squash:

Place whole winter squash on top of thick pads of newspapers in a cool, dry, well-ventilated location, preferably between 45 and 50 degrees F. Check on a regular basis for rot and use within three to six months depending on variety of squash. Refrigerate tightly wrapped cut pieces of winter squash, such as banana, and use within 5 days.

Once a squash is cooked (by steaming or baking), the flesh of the squash can be stored frozen until needed.

To Prepare and Use Winter Squash:

Look for squash that feels heavy for its size and has hard, deep-colored skin free from blemishes.

All varieties are great for puréeing, roasting and baking. Once squash is cooked and mashed, it can be used in soups, main dishes, vegetable side dishes, even breads, muffins, custards and pies.

Summer Squash:

To Prepare and Use Summer Squash:

Thoroughly scrub each squash under running water until the skin feels clean. The cut off

and discard the stem end and scrape off the other end. Only if the skin is unusually tough or the surface feels especially gritty after washing, is it necessary to peel the squash. Most summer squash is now ready to be used in any recipe.

Depending on your recipe, you may grate, slice, or cut into pieces of various shapes.

To steam summer squash: Arrange the slices/pieces of squash in a strainer or rack over 1/2-inch of boiling water. Cover and steam just until barely tender. Remove from heat and drain well. Toss with melted butter or your favorite sauce.

To saute summer squash: Cook in butter over medium-high heat until barely tender. Season with herbs of your choice, salt, and pepper.

Cooking Winter Squash:

Winter squash can be cut in halves or pieces.

Dress any cooked winter squash with butter and herbs, a cream sauce, cheese sauce, maple syrup and nuts, marinara sauce or stewed fruit.

Any type of mashed or pureed squash can be used in the place of canned pumpkin in soups, pies, cookies or quick breads. Chunks of squash can be added to soups, stews and casseroles.

Preparing Winter Squash: Too cook them, first remove fibers and seeds. Wash the exterior of the squash just before using. The seeds are scooped out before or after cooking. Then bake, steam, or boil the squash.

Using Water When Cooking Winter Squash: When water is used in cooking the squash, the quantity of water should be kept small to avoid losing flavor and nutrients.

Peeling Winter Squash: Because this rind makes most squash difficult to peel, it's easier to cook the unpeeled squash, and then scoop out the cooked flesh. As many recipes do require peeling (and cutting) first. Use a vegetable peeler to remove the skin and when cutting hard winter squashes

Cutting Winter Squash: Winter squash have a hard skin and flesh (this includes acorn, buttercup, butternut, calabaza, delicate, Hubbard, spaghetti, sweet dumpling, and Turban, as well as pumpkin).

To cut winter squash in half, grasp the squash firmly and use a sharp knife to slice through to the center. Then flip and cut the other side until the squash falls open. Remove and discard the seeds.

Hint: Place the whole winter squash in the microwave for 3 minutes; then cut it easily, remove seeds, add butter, etc, and put into hot oven to bake. (Perforate with knife before putting in microwave so it won't explode.)

To Bake Winter Squash: Using a whole (1 to 1 1/2 pound) winter squash, pierce the rind with a fork and bake in a 350 degree oven 45 minutes.

Acorn and butternut squash are frequently cut in half, baked, and served in the shell.

Boil or Steam Winter Squash: Cut into quarters or rings 25 minutes or until tender. Boil or mash winter squash just as you would potatoes. Add peeled squash cubes to your

favorite soups, stews, beans, gratins and vegetable ragouts.

To Make Squash Puree: Cut winter squash (any type) in half lengthwise and remove seeds. Place squash, cut side down, in a shallow pan on aluminum foil or Silpat-lined baking sheet.

Bake at 350 degrees F. until squash is soft, approximately 45 to 60 minutes (depending on the size of your squash). Remove from oven and let cool. When cool, scoop out the cooked flesh/pulp (discarding the shell), place the pulp in a food processor and process until smooth.

Measure out the amount you need for your recipe, and reserve any remaining pulp (either in the refrigerator or freeze) for other uses. NOTE: This Squash Puree may be substituted in any recipe that calls for pumpkin puree.

To Microwave Winter Squash: Place halves or quarters, cut side down, in a shallow dish; add 1/4 cup water. Cover tightly and microwave on HIGH 6 minutes per pound. Whole Squash - Poke squash all over with a fork. Microwave the squash at full power (High) approximately 5 to 10 minutes (depending on size of squash).

Testing Winter Squash for Doneness: Test for doneness by piercing with a fork. Fork should easily pierce peel and flesh. Let sit until cool enough to handle, cut in half lengthwise, scoop out seeds (if needed), and proceed with recipe or eat.