

Cooking with Winter Squash

When to Buy: Winter squash and pie pumpkins are typically available from local farms beginning in October, and lasting through February or March. They can be stored for several months so stock up in early and eat them all winter long!

How Long Squash Varieties Will Keep: A general rule of thumb for best flavor and storage is to consume the smallest squash varieties first, saving the big Hubbards, Kabochas, and Butternuts for later on in the winter.

- Acorn, Sweet Dumpling, and Spaghetti: up to 3 months after harvest
- Buttercup and Hubbard Types: up to 4 months after harvest
- Kabocha: up to 4 to 5 months after harvest
- Butternut: up to 6 months after harvest



How to Store: Winter squash should be stored in a moderately warm and dry place, between 50 - 55 degrees (avoid colder temperatures). An unheated spare room, closet, or a dry spot in a cellar can work well. Store in a single layer if possible and check regularly for soft spots. As soon as you see any sign of decay, move the squash to the refrigerator and cook promptly! Store cut pieces in the refrigerator.

Freezing Roasted Winter Squash: To freeze winter squash or pumpkin, first cut the squash in half and scoop out the seeds. Place the squash halves cut side down in a baking dish and pour in 1/2-inch of water. Bake in a 400F oven until the flesh of the squash is very soft. This will take 40 minutes to 1 hour. Let the squash cool, then scoop out the cooked flesh with a spoon. At this point you can freeze the cooked squash as is. If you want your squash to have a smooth texture, puree briefly in the food processor or mash with a potato masher. Pack the cooked squash into freezer bags or upright freezer containers leaving 1-inch head space. Either way, measure the squash before freezing it and label so it's easy to cook with it later!

Easy Roasted Squash Soup

Recipe source: Adapted from www.fullbellyfarm.com

4 to 5 cups roasted winter squash (see roasting instructions above)
1 large yellow onion, thinly sliced
1 cup milk (or 1 can coconut milk)
1 to 2 cups chicken or vegetable stock
salt and pepper to taste

Caramelize the onion in 1 1/2 tablespoons of olive oil. In a food processor, add the squash, onions, milk, 1 cup stock, salt, and pepper and process until smooth. Continue adding more stock until the soup reaches the consistency you desire. Warm the soup in a heavy bottomed sauce pan over medium heat. Serve warm! *Optional -- steam or fry down some greens and then add them to the soup after you have pureed it.*

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Butternut Squash Gratin

Recipe source: www.splendidtable.org

3 Tbsp unsalted butter
1 (2-pound) butternut squash
3/4 tsp fine sea salt
1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
1/3 cup grated Pecorino Romano cheese
2 Tbsp fresh thyme leaves
1/2 cup heavy cream

Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter a 9-inch baking dish with 1 tablespoon butter. Peel and seed squash, then thinly slice using a hand slicer, such as a Mandoline (if you don't have one, just slice very thin). Layer squash in baking dish, sprinkling some of salt and pepper between each layer. When baking dish is half filled, sprinkle 1/2 of cheese and thyme over squash. Continue layering squash with salt and pepper. Pour cream evenly over top layer, then sprinkle with remaining cheese and thyme. Cover baking dish with foil and bake until squash is tender, about 45 minutes. Remove foil from baking dish and preheat broiler. Broil gratin until top is browned about 4 minutes. Serve.

WINTER



SQUASH

Squash Pancakes

Recipe source: *Adapted from saveur.com*

2 cups flour
2 Tbsp sugar
2 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp baking soda
3/4 tsp cinnamon
1/3 tsp nutmeg
1/2 tsp salt
3/4 cup cooked winter squash
or pumpkin
1 1/2 cups milk
1/4 tsp cider vinegar
2 eggs
1/2 tsp vanilla
butter for the pan



In a medium bowl mix together flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt: set aside. In a large bowl, whisk together squash, milk, vinegar, butter, eggs and vanilla. Add dry mixture to wet and stir until just thick and combined (lumps are okay).

Heat a pan or griddle over medium-low heat; melt a little butter to the bottom or coat lightly with cooking spray. Ladle approximately 1/4 cup batter into the pan for each pancake and cook until the undersides are brown and the tops are lightly speckled with bubbles. Flip pancakes and cook until undersides are browned. Serve warm with local maple syrup!

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