



FOOD PRESERVATION SERIES

Winter Squash

Michigan-grown winter squash is available
September through November.

RECOMMENDED VARIETIES

Acorn, Banana, Buttercup, Butternut, Golden Delicious, Hubbard, Spaghetti are recommended for freezing.

TYPES OF WINTER SQUASH

Acorn squash is round and dark green or orange on the outside. It is ideal for baking and goes well with sweet, nutty or spicy stuffing.

Buttercup squash has a hard shell turban-like shape and sweeter than other varieties. It can be baked, steamed and a substitute for sweet potato.

Butternut squash is pear-shaped and a creamy yellow to tan color. It is perfect for mashing.

Hubbard squash grows very large and is often sold cut into pieces. After cooking, it mashes well and can be used in breads, muffins, pancakes, or soups.

Spaghetti squash is oblong and a creamy yellow on the outside. The inside is stringy and mild flavored. It can be served like pasta.

FOOD SAFETY TIPS

Purchase squash with stems that are not shriveled, blackened or moist. Keep separate from meat, poultry and seafood products.

Keep squash away from raw meat so that meat juices do not contaminate it

Keep in the refrigerator, away from raw meat so that meat juices do not contaminate it.

Wash hands before and after handling fresh produce.

Scrub winter squash with a vegetable brush using cool running water before cooking and cutting. Do not use soap or detergent.

Use a separate cutting board for vegetables, and keep away from raw meat, poultry and seafood

Follow standardized procedures recommended by the United States Department of Agriculture for home canning.

YIELD

One pound	1 large acorn squash. 4 half-cup servings. 1 ½ cups mashed squash
1 small acorn squash	2 half-cup servings.
3 pounds of winter squash	2 pints canned.
10 pounds	canner load of 9 pints
16 pounds	canner load of 7 quarts

HOW TO STORE

Do not wash squash before storing.

Store whole winter squash in a cool (45 to 50 oF), dry place.

If stored properly, most varieties will keep up to 3 months.

Store cut squash in plastic wrap in the refrigerator. Use cut squash within a week.

Canned squash is best if consumed within a year and safe as long as lids remain vacuum sealed.

QUICK AND EASY SERVING TIPS

Top baked acorn squash with salt and pepper or applesauce and cinnamon.

Mash butternut squash with a small amount of butter or margarine and brown sugar.

Top spaghetti squash with a little butter or margarine or your favorite pasta sauce and Parmesan cheese.

RECIPE

Squash-Apple Casserole

2 ½ cups winter squash, such as acorn, butternut or hubbard
1 ½ cups cooking apples, such as Macintosh, Granny Smith or Rome
½ teaspoon nutmeg
1 teaspoon cinnamon

1. Wash and prepare squash and apples (for extra fiber, do not peel apples).
2. Alternate layers of squash and apples in an 8x8 inch pan; layer last with apples.
3. Sprinkle spices over top layer.
4. Cover with aluminum foil.
5. Bake at 350 oF for 45-60 minutes, until squash is tender.

HOW TO PREPARE

Most varieties can be substituted for each other in recipes, with the exception of spaghetti squash.

Microwave

Scrub whole squash (such as an acorn squash). Pierce several times with a knife. Microwave on high power for 6 to 7 minutes. Rotate squash and turn over. Microwave another 6 to 7 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes. Baking time varies, depending upon size of squash.

Or, scrub squash and cut in half. Remove seeds and “strings.” Put about ¼ inch of water in a microwave-safe baking dish. Put squash halves,

cut side down, in the dish. Pierce squash several times with a knife. Microwave on high power for 6 to 7 minutes. Rotate baking dish and microwave another 6 to 7 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes.

Note: Microwave cooking times are provided as a guide. Cooking times vary because of differences in microwave ovens. Check product often for desired doneness.

Bake. All winter squash varieties bake well.

Whole Squash

Scrub squash and pierce several times with a sharp knife. Place in a baking dish and bake at 400 degrees F, uncovered, until tender when pierced with a fork, about 45 to 60 minutes. If winter squash is baked with other foods or at a lower temperature, increase baking time.

Halved or Cut Squash

Scrub and cut squash in half or into pieces. Remove seeds and “strings” — unless it’s spaghetti squash. For spaghetti squash, the “strings” are the squash. Put a small amount of water in a baking dish (about 1/4 inch deep). Put halves or pieces in the baking dish, cut side down. Bake uncovered at 350 o F, until tender, about 45 minutes.

Steam.

Steaming works well for cut pieces.

Scrub squash and cut in half or into pieces. Put 1 to 2 inches of water in a saucepan and bring to a boil.

Put squash pieces into a steamer basket. Place steamer basket over the boiling water, cover and steam until tender, about 12 to 20 minutes. Larger pieces of squash take longer to cook.

Nutritional analysis per serving: 40 Calories; 0 grams (g.) fat; 0 milligrams (mg.) cholesterol; 0 mg. Sodium; 2 g Dietary fiber

HOW TO PRESERVE

FREEZING WINTER SQUASH

Scrub and cut squash into cooking-size pieces and remove seeds. Cook until soft in boiling water, in steam, or in a pressure cooker, or bake in an oven until soft. Remove pulp from rind and mash (do not mash spaghetti squash; leave it in strings). Cool quickly by putting pan with squash in cold water and stir occasionally to speed cooling. Put cooled squash in freezer con-tainers leaving ½

inch headspace. Seal, label, date and freeze. Use frozen squash within 8 to 12 months for best quality. For spaghetti squash, mashing the cooked pulp is not necessary.

Do not freeze more than one quart (2 to 3 pounds) of food per cubic foot of freezer capacity per day. One cubic foot will hold 30 quarts of food.

CANNING WINTER SQUASH

PRESSURE CANNING IS THE ONLY SAFE METHOD FOR CANNING WINTER SQUASH due to its low acid content. Scrub squash, remove seeds, cut into 1-inch slices and peel. Cut flesh into 1-inch cubes. Add to a saucepan of boiling water and boil 2 minutes. Caution: do not mash or puree. Fill clean canning jars with cubes, leaving 1 inch of headspace. Fill jar to 1 inch from top with boiling hot cooking liquid. Remove air bubbles and wipe jar rims. Seal, label and process using the recommended general pressure canner directions and process times (Table 1).

Table 1. Recommended process time for Winter Squash in a dial-gauge pressure canner.

Style of Pack	Jar Size	Process Time	Canner Pressure (PSI*) at Altitudes of			
			0 - 2,000 ft	2,001 - 4,000 ft	4,001 - 6,000 ft	6,001 - 8,000 ft
Hot	Pints	55 min	11 lb	12 lb	13 lb	14 lb
	Quarts	90	11	12	13	14

Table 2. Recommended process time for Winter Squash in a weighted-gauge pressure canner.

Style of Pack	Jar Size	Process Time	Canner Pressure (PSI*) at Altitudes of	
			0 - 1,000 ft	Above 1,000 ft
Hot	Pints	55 min	10 lb	15 lb
	Quarts	90	10	15

*PSI – pounds per square inch

Source: National Center for Home Preservation
<http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/index.html>

REPROCESSING

If after 12 to 24 hours the lid is unsealed, replace the jar if defective, use a new lid and a screw band, and REPROCESS. Dump out the squash and liquid into a pan, reheat until boiling, and fill hot jars with squash and liquid, leaving 1 inch headspace. Follow the recommended times (Tables 1 and 2).

FURTHER INFORMATION

Food Domain Website
<http://fooddomain.msu.edu/>

National Center for Home Preservation
<http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/index.html>

“So Easy to Preserve” 5th ed. 2006. Cooperative Extension Service, The University of Georgia, Athens.
<http://www.uga.edu/setp/>

Safe Handling of Raw Produce and Fresh-Squeezed Fruit and Vegetable Juices
<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/prodsafe.html>

Food Stamp Nutrition Connection Recipe Finder
http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov/index.php?mode=display&rec_id=30

This bulletin replaces E-2663 Using, Storage and Preserving Series-Winter Squash (Michigan State University Extension, 1990)

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