Using, Storing and Preserving Winter Squash

Michigan-grown winter squash is available September through November.

Recommended varieties
Acorn, banana, butternut, Golden Delicious, Hubbard and spaghetti squash are recommended for freezing.

Storage and food safety
- Purchase squash with stems that are not shriveled, blackened or moist.
- Wash hands before and after handling fresh produce.
- Scrub winter squash with a vegetable brush using cool running water before cooking or cutting. Do not use soap. Do not wash squash before storing.
- Keep squash away from raw meat and meat juices to prevent cross-contamination.
- Store whole winter squash in a cool (45 to 50 degrees F.) place. If stored properly, most varieties will keep up to 3 months.
- Store cut squash in the refrigerator and use within a week.
- For best quality and to preserve nutritional value, preserve only what your family can consume in one year.

Yield

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 pound</th>
<th>=</th>
<th>one large acorn squash</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One small acorn squash</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>2 half-cup servings</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 pounds winter squash</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>2 pints canned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 pounds</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>a canner load of 9 pints</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 pounds</td>
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<td>a canner load of 7 quarts</td>
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Find out more about Michigan Fresh at msue.anr.msu.edu/program/info/mi_fresh.
How to preserve

**Canning**

Winter squash, cubed

Squash should have a hard rind and stringless, mature pulp of ideal quality for cooking fresh. Wash, remove seeds, cut into 1-inch-wide slices, and peel. Cut flesh into 1-inch cubes. Boil 2 minutes in water.

**Caution: Do not mash or puree.** Fill jars with cubes and cooking liquid, leaving 1 inch headspace. Wipe jar rims, adjust lids and process following the recommendations below:

![Recommended processing time for winter squash in a dial-gauge pressure canner.](image)

![Recommended process time for winter squash in a weighted-gauge pressure canner.](image)

Let jars sit undisturbed for 24 hours, check lids to be sure they’ve sealed, remove rings, wash jars, date, label and store.

**Freezing**

Winter squash (*acorn, banana, buttercup, butternut, Golden Delicious, Hubbard, spaghetti*)

Select firm, mature squash with a hard rind. For spaghetti squash, mashing the cooked pulp is not necessary. Cook until soft in boiling water, in steam, in a pressure cooker or in an oven. Remove pulp from rind and mash. To cool, place pan containing winter squash in cold water and stir occasionally. Package leaving ½ inch headspace, remove air, seal, label, date and freeze.

**References**

Information in this bulletin is based on Food Preservation Series — Winter Squash (Michigan State University Extension, October 2006) and So Easy to Preserve (University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, 2006).

This bulletin replaces WO1052 Using, Storing and Preserving Series-Winter Squash (Michigan State University Extension, 2006).