

Winter Squash

In New England, we welcome autumn with these delicious and versatile vegetables. They store well for the long term, so they are available throughout the winter. Winter squash (pumpkins are included in this term) have thicker skins than the summer varieties, so they require longer cooking. Winter squash are pureed for thick soups, mashed and spiced for side dishes, sautéed with garlic and onions, or roasted to tender perfection and baked into pie shells.

Storage:

Refrigerate cut pieces, but the fridge is too humid for whole squash. Keep in a cool, dry place for about 3 months. If storing larger quantities, keep in a single layer to prevent rotting at a cool, above freezing, temperature.

Nutrition:

A source of complex carbohydrates and dietary fiber, potassium, niacin, iron, beta carotene (converts to vitamin A), vitamin C, manganese, folate, omeg-3 fatty acids, vitamins B1 & B6.

Preparation:

-Medium sized varieties (Buttercup, Red Kuri, Kabocha) can be halved and roasted cut-side down at 425 degrees for 30 minutes.

-Thin-skinned varieties (Acorn, Butternut, Delicata,) can be peeled prior to cooking.

-Larger and harder varieties (Hubbard, Turban) can be split by using a sharp cleaver to split the hard rind open, or by using a chef's knife with a mallet to drive blade into the squash. Once it is split, it can be banged on hard surface and pulled apart.

- Cut and peeled pieces may be boiled or microwaved (high at 15 mins) until tender.

-Use Long Pie, Baby Pam, and New England Pie varieties for pumpkin pies.



Types of Winter Squash:

Butternut

Carnival

Buttercup

Acorn

Uncle David's Dessert

Delicata

Hubbard (gray, blue, green)

Red Kuri

Kabocha

Spaghetti

Calabaza

Turban

Long Pie Pumpkin

Long Island Cheese Pumpkin

Baby Pam/Sugar Pie Pumpkin

New England Pie Pumpkin

Raw Butternut Squash Salad With Cranberry Dressing

Recipe adapted from Mark Bittman: "People aren't accustomed to eating raw butternut squash... But when it's grated, it has this wonderful, crunchy quality, and it's also very pretty."

1/2 cup fresh or frozen cranberries, picked over and rinsed

3/4 cup orange juice

1 tablespoon minced ginger

3 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon honey

Salt

Black pepper

1 butternut squash (about 1 1/2 pounds), peeled and seeded

1. Combine the cranberries, orange juice and ginger in a small saucepan over medium-low heat. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until the berries have begun to break, 10 minutes or so. Remove from the heat and add the oil, honey and some salt and pepper. Stir until well combined.

2. Meanwhile, grate the butternut squash by hand or in a food processor. Transfer the squash to a large bowl, add the warm cranberry dressing, and toss to combine everything. Serve warm or at room temperature. (Or cover and refrigerate the salad for up to several hours; bring to room temperature before serving.)

Yield: 4 servings

Roasted Squash And...

1. Halve squash and remove seeds. Place cut-side down, and roast at 425 degrees, testing for doneness with a fork at 25 to 30 minutes.
2. When cool enough to handle, scrape the flesh from the skin.
3. Try these ideas with your squash:

Add butter, maple, and cinnamon for a sweet side dish or breakfast.

Use with a salty cheese and crunchy vegetables as a filling for wraps, tacos, or empanadas.

Puree into a soup stock and season with savory herbs.

Use to bind beans and rice, form into patties, and shallow fry.

Pie, of course!