




SIMPLY GOOD FOOD

SPAGHETTI SQUASH



When baked, the flesh of spaghetti squash separates into spaghetti-like strands. The squash itself may be up to 1 foot in length and 8 inches in diameter. Its' smooth skin is bright yellow, its' flesh pale yellow and rather bland.

Preparation

Cut into wedges or halves with a large, heavy knife remove seeds; peel squash using a sharp knife

TOASTING

To toast squash seeds, rinse them well and dry thoroughly. Toss seeds with oil to coat lightly. Salt to taste and arrange on a baking sheet. Toast in a 325 degree F over until crisp.

The many varieties of squash are all members of the gourd family and are native to the New World. Squash (and other gourds) can grow quite large; in the garden they are recognized by their trailing vines, large leaves and handsome blossoms. Summer squash varieties are eaten while soft and immature; most winter varieties, such as spaghetti squash, are allowed to mature, developing hard skins and starchy meat.

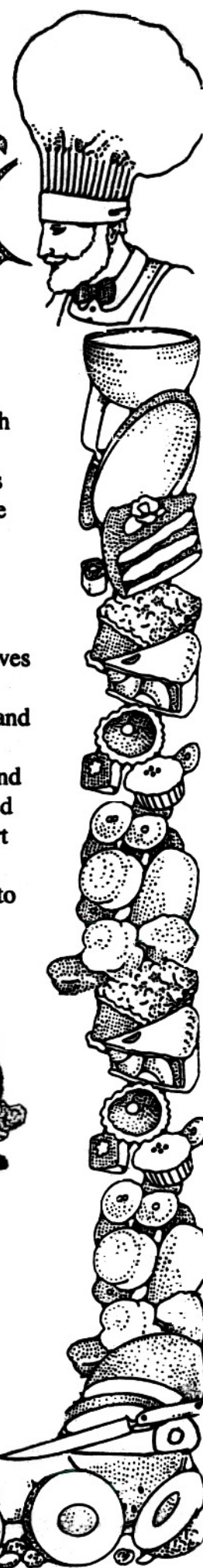
Winter squash varieties may be cut into wedges or halves and baked in their skins until tender; peeled, cut into chunks and boiled or steamed until tender; or cooked and mashed with butter, brown sugar and cream. Small halves may be stuffed with a seasoned meat mixture and baked. Cooked, peeled pieces can be pureed and added to soup, or used as a filling for pastas and pie or as part of a batter. The hard seeds of winter squash may be cleaned, toasted and salted for a delicious companion to cocktails.

AVAILABILITY

Winter squash are excellent keepers and may be stored for several months. Their flesh is generally moist when cooked and ranges from starchy to quite sweet. Some winter squash are available the year around, but peak supplies are in fall and winter.

SELECTION

Pick winter squash that are firm and have hard skins; they should be heavy for their size. Precut wedges should look moist but not mushy.





SPAGHETTI SQUASH SOUP WITH ARTICHOKES

- 1 Spaghetti squash
- 8 cups bouillon
- 1 tablespoon oregano or Italian Spice Blend
- pinch cayenne pepper, or more to taste
- 1 large red onion, halved and sliced thin
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 stalks celery, sliced
- 1 10 ounce box frozen artichoke hearts, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 can chick peas
- 1 lemon
- ½ cup chopped Italian parsley

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Cut the spaghetti squash in half and scoop out the seeds. Place the squash halves, cut side down, on a cookie sheet covered with aluminum foil; bake 1 hour. Meanwhile, bring the bouillon, spices, onion, garlic and celery to a boil in a large pot and simmer for 10 - 15 minutes. When the squash is cool enough to handle, run a fork over the flesh to separate it into spaghetti-like strands. Add these to the bouillon along with the artichoke hearts and chick peas; simmer 15 - 20 minutes. Cut the lemon in half and squeeze the juice from one half into the soup. Stir in the parsley. Taste and add more cayenne pepper if desired. Cut the remaining lemon half into thin slices and use them to garnish each serving.

6 - 8 servings

Supporting State Extension Goal: Health, Safety and Well Being

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