



SIMPLY GOOD FOOD

Squash (Winter-Hubbard)

Squash are really edible gourds: winter and summer squash as well as pumpkins. Summer squash are harvested immature, while winter squash ripen on the vine, then are harvested in autumn and stored for winter use. Both groups include bush and vining types—although most winter squash are vining.

All winter squashes do not taste the same but have discernible flavor and textural characteristics.

Marketing: At the market, it is often hard to buy whole squash, or sometimes to know what type of squash you are purchasing, since many markets cut large squash up into portions. If you ask, the produce manager should be able to identify the variety. Buy winter squash that is hard, heavy, and clean; avoid any that is cracked or has a soft or decayed spot.

Special Characteristics of Winter Squash

- *Acorn*: Do not purée; texture is best baked.
- *Buttercup*: Texture is very dry and smooth. Mild flavor.
- *Butternut*: Medium-sweet flavor, good texture, average moistness.
- *Hubbard*: Can be bland and watery.
- *Sweet Meat*: Dry, sweet, mealy texture.
- *Vegetable Spaghetti Squash*: Bland flavor; unique crunchy texture.

Storage and Preserving:

- Store squash at 50-55 degrees in a dry spot with low humidity.
- Winter squash stores so well that there is no need to can or freeze it. However, cooked squash freezes nicely, and it is a convenience to have it ready to eat.

Nutritional Information: The Hubbard squash is a significant source of Vitamin A and also has Potassium in a fair amount.

- Yields:**
- 2 ½ pounds whole squash = 1 ½ pounds 10 ounces cut-up squash = 2 ¾-3 cups puréed squash
 - 1 pound trimmed squash = approximately 2 cups cooked squash

- Hints:**
- Small chunks of squash are a good addition to soups and stews.
 - Squash cooked with pot roast or a braised dish of any kind will thicken the sauce nicely when mashed.
 - Squash is low in sodium, so it is a good choice for restricted-salt diets.



Microwave

- *Acorn Squash*: Two whole squash cut in half and covered will cook in 13 minutes. (Add no water.)
- *Hubbard Squash*: 2 pounds peeled squash cut into 1 ½-2 inch chunks, placed on a glass pie plate, and covered will take 8 minutes to cook tender, but not soft.
- *Butternut*: A 2-pound squash cut in half (3 inches wide at center, 8 ½ inches long), placed in a glass pie plate, and covered will cook in 12 minutes. (Uncover after 6 minutes and cook for 6 minutes longer.)
- *Spaghetti Squash*: A 3 ½-pound whole spaghetti squash placed in oven will cook in 15 minutes.

Leftovers

- Freeze leftover squash—it's delicious reheated.
- Use small amounts added to yeast breads or pancake batters to give color and moisture.
- Use puréed in soups.

Baked Mashed Squash

2 ½ -3 lb unpeeled winter squash
5 tablespoons butter
Salt and freshly ground pepper
Brown sugar (optional)
¼-½ cup chopped nuts (optional)

Peel squash and steam or bake until tender. Mash. You should have 1½-2 cups squash. Mix in 4 tablespoons butter and season to taste with salt and pepper. Place squash in a buttered 1-quart baking dish, dot with remaining butter, and cover with a sprinkling of brown sugar and nuts, if you wish. Bake in a preheated 350 degree oven for 30 minutes. (Serves 4)

- Spread 1 cup grated Swiss cheese or combination of cheeses over top. Sauté 2 tablespoons chopped onions in 3 tablespoons butter along with ½ cup fresh bread crumbs. Cover cheese and bake as above.
- Melt 2 tablespoons butter and sauté 1 large chopped apple until cooked through; season with cinnamon and sugar and spread over squash. Bake as above.
- Cover with sour cream, crumbled bacon bits, or fresh herbs such as dill.

Squash Nut Bread

⅓ cup butter
1½ cups sugar
2 eggs
1½ cups mashed cooked winter squash
1¾ cups flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon nutmeg
½ teaspoon ground ginger
¼ teaspoon ground cloves
½ cup chopped nuts

Cream together butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs, then squash. Sift together remaining ingredients, reserving nuts. Stir dry ingredients into squash mixture; add nuts. Butter a loaf pan and pour in the batter. Let rest for 15 minutes. Bake in a preheated 350 degree oven for 1 hour or until a skewer in the center comes out clean. Keep bread in pan for 10 minutes before turning out. (Makes 1 loaf).

Source: *The Victory Garden Cookbook, Joy of Cooking.*

Supporting State Extension Goal: Health, Safety and Well Being

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