



WHAT TO DO WITH WINTER SQUASH



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Winter squash is fantastic right now and prepared properly, is sure to become a family favorite. Compared to summer squash which is much smaller and has softer skin and flesh, winter squash is grown to maturity with thicker, harder skin and very firm flesh. These sweet and tasty members of the gourd family are extremely versatile and can be enjoyed in soups, pastas, salads, and even desserts!

Varieties include:

Acorn squash: As the name suggests, its shape resembles that of an acorn, and typically weighs one to two pounds, being between four and seven inches long.

Butternut squash: It has a long neck with a bulbous end that contains the seeds inside. The exterior is a pale orange color with relatively thin skin, while the sweet flesh inside is a gorgeous bright orange.

Honeynut: This is a smaller, slightly sweeter version of butternut.

Delicata squash: Also known as potato squash, sweet potato squash, or Bohemian squash. It is an oblong-shaped squash with cream-colored skin, striped with dark green (sometimes orange) skin.

Kabocha squash: A thick, green-skinned (or red-orange) pumpkin-shaped squash. Inside is a semi-firm

Rabouche squash: A thick, green-skinned (or red/orange) pumpkin-shaped squash. Inside is a semi-firm, dense golden flesh that has a rich, sweet flavor. The flavor is similar to a pumpkin or sweet potato.

Spaghetti squash: Hard rind with a unique interior flesh that separates into pasta-like strings when cooked.

When buying winter squash be careful to choose one that's firm, heavy, and with no soft spots or mold, or soft stem. It will last a long time on your countertop or in a cool, dry space until you're ready to use it. Once cut, store in the refrigerator for a few days.

Your squash is easiest to cook by roasting it. Here is an easy, delicious way to enjoy winter squash:

Easy Roasted Winter Squash:

- Preheat oven to 400°F.
- Carefully cut off the stem, then cut the squash in half lengthwise.
- Scoop out seeds (save to grow your own squash!), and place cut-side up on an oven-safe, foil-lined pan.
- Brush squash with olive oil, and sprinkle with garlic powder (optional), salt, and pepper.
- Turn the cut side down and roast for 50 minutes to one hour.
- A fork poked into the skin will indicate it's done. Let it cool. Now you can peel and mash it for a delicious side dish, stuff it with rice and vegetables like [this recipe](#), or blend it into a smooth, comforting soup like [this one](#).

Spaghetti squash is the only winter squash treated a bit differently because the flesh is stringy. It's very good to make zero-carb noodles for pasta dishes. This [Spaghetti Squash with Gruyere](#) is a real winner!

Pick up a squash or two next time you visit the farmers' market. You are guaranteed freshness and the best that can be grown!

TAGS

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