



# COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

# WINTER SQUASH



Winter squash grows on long vines and belong to the Cucurbitaceae family. Like summer squash, winter squash originated in Mesoamerica over 7,000 years ago. Mesoamerica is the area between Central Mexico and Costa Rica. Squash made its way around the world on trade routes. Winter squash has a nutty, earthy, and sometimes sweet flavor. Winter squash can be baked, fried, grilled, roasted, or sautéed. It can be used in baked goods, salads, soups, stir fries, or stuffed and baked with other vegetables and grains. In Michigan, winter squash is harvested in September and October.



## WINTER SQUASH IS

- A good source of vitamin C\*. Vitamin C is important to the body's tissues and immune system.
- A source of fiber. Fiber helps us feel fuller and benefits the digestive and cardiovascular systems.
- A source of potassium. Potassium helps maintain healthy blood pressure.
- A source of vitamin A. Vitamin A plays an important role in the healing process and eye health.

*\*Foods that are high in vitamin C, calcium and/or iron can help protect you from lead absorption.*

## MICHIGAN MADE

Michigan ranks in the top four states nationally for fresh and processed summer and winter squash production. Popular types of winter squash grown in Michigan include acorn, butternut, Delicata, Hubbard, pumpkin, and spaghetti. Most squash production takes place in the lower two-thirds of Michigan's lower peninsula along the lakeshores.

## FUN FACTS

- There are two types of squash, summer and winter.
- Squash, cucumbers, melons, and gourds are all related.
- Winter squash ripens on the vine and is ripe when the rind is hard.
- The inside flesh of spaghetti squash resembles noodles after being cooked.
- The thick skins or rinds on winter squash helps them stay fresh for months.
- Pumpkin pie is the most popular dessert for Thanksgiving.
- The heaviest winter squash known was grown in Charlotte, Michigan and weighed 104.5 pounds according to the Guinness Book of World Records.
- Indigenous Peoples in the Americas refer to squash as one of the "Three Sisters" crops. They are planted in mounds with beans and corn by Indigenous women farmers. The plants nurture each other like family, growing better together. This form of planting became common across North America.

## BUYING AND STORING

- Select firm, heavy winter squash with dull skin and no cracks or soft spots.
- Store winter squash in a dark, dry, cool place. Most varieties will last whole for three months or more.
- Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables before using. Wash the outside of winter squash under cool running water and scrub with a produce brush before cutting.

## MORE THAN FRESH

In addition to fresh, winter squash is available frozen and canned. When buying packaged winter squash, be sure to read labels and choose items that are reduced or low sodium (salt) or no salt added, low in saturated fat, and with no added sugar.

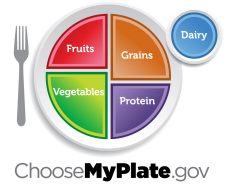




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## EAT FROM THE MYPLATE FOOD GROUPS

MyPlate focuses on whole grains, lean protein, low-fat dairy, and half the plate being fruits and vegetables. Winter squash is part of the Vegetable Group. Most people need 2-3 cups of vegetables per day. For more information visit: [myplate.gov](https://myplate.gov).



## IT ALL COUNTS

Fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and 100% vegetable and fruit juices count toward your daily MyPlate goals.

## MAPLE-CINNAMON BUTTERNUT SQUASH

Time: 40 minutes | Makes: 4 servings | Serving Size: ¾ cup

Nutrition Information Per Serving: Calories 128, Carbohydrate 18g, Dietary Fiber 4g, Protein 1g, Total Fat 7g, Saturated Fat 1g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 301mg

Always wash hands before preparing food. Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables before using.



### INGREDIENTS

- 1 large butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1½ tablespoons maple syrup
- ¾ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon dried rosemary (optional)

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Preheat the oven to 400 F.
- Mix squash gently with oil, maple syrup, cinnamon, salt, pepper, and rosemary (optional) in large bowl.
- Arrange squash on baking sheets, do not overlap.
- Roast for 25 to 35 minutes, or until squash is tender when pierced with a fork.
- Remove from the oven and serve.

### TRY THIS

- Substitute winter squash for half the potatoes in any mashed potato recipe.
- Serve roasted winter squash with sautéed apples, raisins, a little cinnamon, and cooked grains like brown rice.
- Add cooked winter squash to casseroles, hash, omelets, quiche, pastas, soups, and tacos.

### CHANGE IT UP

- Substitute 2 teaspoons of brown sugar for maple syrup.
- Make it sweet and spicy. Add ¼ teaspoon ground cayenne pepper in Step 3.
- Omit pepper and dried rosemary. Let cool and serve over vanilla yogurt.

