



Squash

NUTRITION:

Winter squash is an excellent source of vitamin A and fiber and contains 40 calories per 1/2 cup serving. Summer squash contains less than 16 calories but has far less vitamin A.

HOW TO SELECT:

Winter Squash: Select medium to large squash true to variety in size, color, and shape. Rind should be hard and glossy. Color should be fully developed. Avoid immature squash with light color, soft, or damaged rind, or insect or mechanical damage. Some types include butternut, acorn, hubbard, banana, and spaghetti.

Summer Squash: Select uniform specimens true to variety in size, color and shape. Small to medium (4-8") are best. Avoid large, over mature, scarred skins, missing stems, wilted or softness. Some varieties include zucchini, crookneck, and scallops.

STORAGE:

Winter Squash: Harvest before the first frost. Cut with 1"-2" stems. Store in an area 80-85 degrees for 10 days. This is called curing and will harden the rinds and heal surface cuts. Then store in a dry, warm place (50-60 degrees) such as a dry basement, heated garage, or a closet adjoining an outside wall. Note: Do not cure acorn squash.

Summer Squash: Harvest before the first frost. Cut with 1"-2" stems attached. Skin should be easily penetrated with the thumbnail. Do not wash. Clean by brushing with a soft bristled brush. Wrap individually in paper to prevent scarring. Store in a cool (40-50 degrees) moist place such as an unheated garage, storage shed, or crawl space under the house.

DRYING:

Winter Squash: Cut into strips 1-inch wide. Peel off rind; scrape off seeds. Cut strips into pieces 1/8 inch thick. Water blanch 1 minute or steam blanch 2-3 minutes. Spread in a thin layer on trays. Dry at 140 degrees until brittle. 10-16 hours.

Summer Squash: Wash, trim, and cut into 1/4" slices. Steam blanch for 2-3 minutes if squash is to be used in cooking. Do not blanch if using as chips. Spread in a thin layer on trays. Dry at 140 degrees until brittle (10-12 hours). For added variety, try dipping in a diluted barbecue sauce before spreading on the tray. They will taste like barbecued potato chips.

FREEZING:

Select full colored mature winter squash. Cut or break into fairly uniform pieces. Remove seeds. Bake at 350 degrees or steam until tender. Cool, scoop pulp from rind and mash or put through ricer. Pack in moisture vapor proof container allowing at least 1" headspace for expansion. Label, date containers and freeze. This should maintain high quality for 8-12 months.

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CANNING:

PRESSURE CAN

Winter Squash: Produce needed per quart jar: 1-1/2 to 3 pounds of squash or 15 pounds per 7 quart canner. Select full colored mature fruit. Wash, remove seeds, and peel. Cut into 1" cubes. Add just enough water to cover, boil for 2 minutes.

Caution: Do not mash or puree. Fill jars with cubes and cooking liquids leaving 1" headspace. Adjust lids and process in pressure canner, pints 55 minutes at 10 pounds (weighted gauge) or 11 pounds (dial gauge) and quarts for 90 minutes at 10 pounds (weighted gauge) and 11 pounds (dial gauge.)

For more information call WSU Skagit County Extension:

360-428-4270

Or visit:

<http://skagit.wsu.edu/FAM/MFP.htm>

**HANDOUT DEVELOPED BY: WSU Master Food Preservers
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