



# KENTUCKY WINTER SQUASH AND PUMPKIN

By Sandra Bastin, M.N.S., R.D.  
State Extension Specialist, Food and Nutrition

**S**quash and pumpkin originated in America. The name squash is derived from the American Indian word askutasquash. Squash is classified as either winter or summer. Summer varieties such as zucchini and crookneck are eaten while soft and immature. Winter varieties such as acorn, buttercup, butternut, Hubbard, and spaghetti are allowed to mature into hard, starchy fruits that keep well for months. Pumpkin is probably the most widely known of the winter squash varieties.

## *Fresh Is Best*

The greatest selection of fresh winter squash is available in late summer through fall. Winter squash has a mild flavor that combines well with more flavorful fruits and vegetables such as apples, tomatoes, green beans, and corn. Herbs, spices, and seasonings such as allspice, basil, brown sugar, cinnamon, cloves, fennel, ginger, mace, nutmeg, onion, and savory bring out its sweet, nutty flavor. Pumpkin and other winter squash can be pureed, made into soup, roasted, fried, or baked. They can also be incorporated into baked goods or main dish entrees. Small varieties may also be stuffed, boiled, or mashed.

All varieties of winter squash are low in fat and sodium; plus, they are excellent sources of dietary fiber and vitamin A. One-half cup of cooked, cubed winter squash without any added seasoning has approximately 40 calories and can add flavor, color, and texture to any meal.

## *Selecting and Storing*

Winter squash and pumpkin should be heavy for their size with a hard, tough rind free of blemishes and soft spots. Pumpkin should be brightly colored. Store in a cool, dry place and use within a month.

## *Preparation Tips*

To prepare winter squash and pumpkin, rinse in cold water, lightly scrubbing with a vegetable brush, cut into halves or quarters, and remove seeds and stringy portions. Use only a small amount of water during cooking to prevent loss of flavor and water-soluble vitamins. If you add butter or margarine, do

so only after cooking to prevent the loss of fat-soluble vitamin A. One pound of squash will yield 2 to 3 servings.

### *To steam:*

Steamed winter squash is excellent and easy to prepare.

1. Wash, peel, remove seeds, and cut the squash into 2-inch cubes or quarter the squash and cook with the rind on. The rind can be easily removed after cooking.
2. Bring one inch of water to a boil in a saucepan. Place the squash on a rack or in a basket in the pan. Do not immerse squash in the water.
3. Cover the pan tightly and steam squash 30-40 minutes, or until tender.

### *To microwave:*

Winter squash cooks much faster in the microwave than in the oven.

1. Wash and cut lengthwise. If the squash is too hard to cut, microwave 1-2 minutes to soften the rind, then cut. Remove seeds.
2. Place squash in a baking dish and cover dish with plastic wrap.
3. Microwave until tender, rearranging the pieces halfway through the cooking time; follow the guidelines below.

*Acorn squash, cut in half, microwave:*

1/2 squash	5-8 minutes
1 squash	8½-11½ minutes
2 squash	13-16 minutes

*Butternut, cut in 1/2 pound pieces, microwave:*

2 pieces	3-4½ minutes
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*Hubbard, cut in 1/2 pound pieces, microwave:*

2 pieces	4-6½ minutes
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4. Allow to stand covered, 5-10 minutes, before serving.

### *To bake:*

1. Wash and cut lengthwise. Small squash may be baked in halves. Large squash should be cut into portion size. Remove seeds. Seeds may be removed, washed, and toasted at 350° F for 20 minutes.
2. Place squash in baking dish.
3. Bake at 400°F for 1 hour, or until tender.

## ***Pumpkin Seed Muffins***

*Yield: 12 muffins*

1-3/4 cups all purpose flour  
1/2 cup sugar  
1/4 cup toasted pumpkin seeds (see instructions above),  
chopped  
3 teaspoons baking powder  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
3/4 cup milk  
1/2 cup cooked, mashed pumpkin  
1/3 cup oil  
1 egg, well beaten

In large bowl, combine the flour, sugar, pumpkin seeds, baking powder, cinnamon and salt. In small bowl, combine remaining ingredients and stir into dry ingredients just until moistened. (Batter should be lumpy.) Spoon batter evenly into greased muffin cups. Bake at 400° F for 20-25 minutes or until the tops of the muffins spring back when lightly touched. Remove and serve warm.

### **Nutrition Information**

Serving size: 1 muffin  
Calories: 190  
Protein: 4 g  
Carbohydrate: 24 g  
Fat: 8 g  
Sodium: 175 mg

## ***Citrus Squash***

*Yield: 6 servings*

2 medium acorn squash  
1/4 cup unsweetened orange juice  
1/4 cup unsweetened apple juice  
1/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar  
1 tablespoon reduced calorie maple syrup  
1 tablespoon margarine  
1 teaspoon grated lemon peel

Wash and cut squash in half. Remove seeds and pulp. Cut each half crosswise into 1/2 inch slices. Arrange slices in a greased baking dish. Pour orange juice and apple juice over squash. Bake covered at 350°F for 30 minutes. In small saucepan, combine remaining ingredients and bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Drizzle sauce mixture over squash. Bake uncovered for 15-20 additional minutes, basting occasionally.

## **Nutrition Information per Serving**

Serving size: 1/6 recipe  
Calories: 130  
Protein: 1 g  
Carbohydrate: 28 g  
Fat: 2 g  
Sodium: 35 mg

## ***Stuffed Acorn Squash***

*Yield: 6 servings*

3 small acorn squash  
1 cup cooked rice  
1 cup herb seasoned stuffing mix  
1/2 cup finely chopped onion  
1/2 cup canned chicken broth, low sodium  
1/4 cup raisins  
1/3 cup unsalted dry-roasted walnuts  
1/4 teaspoon black pepper

Wash and cut each squash in half. Remove seeds and pulp. In bowl, combine remaining ingredients and mix. Fill squash halves loosely with stuffing mixture. Place squash halves in a baking pan and cover. Bake at 400°F approximately 1 hour or until squash is tender.

### **Nutrition Information**

Serving Size: 1/2 squash  
Calories: 241  
Protein: 6 g  
Carbohydrate: 44 g  
Fat: 6 g  
Cholesterol: 1 mg  
Sodium: 246 mg