

# Winter Squash decoder

**SEASON:** August through frost (stores into the winter)

**GROWING:** To achieve maximal longevity, winter squash need to be "cured" in a warm place after harvest to harden the skins.

Leaving a stem attached also increases their life dramatically.

**WHAT TO EXPECT:** Under those sturdy skins lies sweet, yellow to orange flesh ready for baking, soups, pasta, sides, braises...

**VITAMINS AND MINERALS:** Vitamin A galore!!! Followed by C, potassium, manganese, and a bevy of B-vitamins.

**STORAGE:** Most winter squashes keep best between 55 and 60 degrees, with low humidity. They can last up to 3 months. In most New England homes in fall and winter, dry air is no problem; hunt around for a cool spot in closets, along outside walls, or in a hallway. Acorn squash prefer cooler temps.

**WHY BUY IT LOCALLY?** Stocking up on RI grown storage crops is a fine way to carry your support of local farms into the winter season, when the fields themselves have gone into hibernation.



## Cooking with Winter Squash

### VARIETIES:

- \* Butternut: Cream-colored skin and large pear-shape, deep orange sweet flavored flesh. Holds its shape fairly well, also mashes up.
- \* Acorn: Fluted dark green skin hides pale yellow/orange flesh. Usually baked halved, skin on, & eaten with spoon. Flesh is firm & a little stringy.
- \* Hubbard: Large to huge variety, usually grey-green, sometimes dark green or orange. Flavor is not as sweet as some others; good for mashing.
- \* Pumpkins: From round to bat-shaped, usually orange, with very creamy flesh. Steam and puree for pie filling, or use as side dish.
- \* Delicata: Striking green stripes on white, elongated squash. Cook like acorn squash, though for less time. Sweet Dumplings are very similar.
- \* Buttercup: Squat, round squash with a paler green "button" on the bottom. Flesh is full-flavored, very creamy, and sweet. Kabocha are very similar, minus the button, and come in orange as well as green.
- \* Spaghetti: Pale yellow elongated squash with golden interior. Flesh is so stringy that after cooking it can be shredded out of the shell in long strands, thus its name. Cook by roasting (see below).

### BASIC PREPARATION

- \* Wash outside of squash. Cut in half, stem end to base. With a large metal spoon, scrape out the webby matrix of seeds in the cavity.
- \* If a recipe needs peeled squash, it might be easier to cut in pieces first & use a knife instead of peeler. Slice into 1" strips, lay on its side on cutting board & cut off peel in little pieces cutting toward the board.

### BASIC COOKING

- \* Steaming for mashed squash: Cut into same-size chunks, & place in a steamer basket in a pot of boiling water. Cover & steam until easily pierced with a fork. Peels easily after steaming, no need to do ahead!
- \* Roasting: Place prepped halves of delicata or acorn in baking pan, and bake at 375 until tender (30-45 min, depending on size). Dress them up with butter and maple syrup in the cavities, or fill with stuffing.
- \* Companion flavors: sage, brown butter, whole grains, toasted nuts, cheese, nutmeg, maple, ginger, smoked chilies, corn, browned onion...

**Thanks for shopping our market! We hope to see you next week.**