



# WINTER SQUASH

Cafeteria Connection

## Tell Me about Winter Squash

Winter squash, as its name implies, is a type of squash that is harvested in the fall and can be stored throughout winter. Unlike summer squash, they form a tough rind, which helps them store longer. Popular winter squash varieties include butternut, spaghetti, acorn, banana, buttercup, Hubbard, sweet dumpling, delicata, and—of course—pumpkin, though there are dozens of varieties grown in Washington. The seeds in winter squash can be roasted for a tasty snack.

## Crediting Information

- Winter squash credits toward the Vegetable meal pattern component by volume served. For example, 1/2 cup winter squash credits as 1/2 cup vegetable.
- In School Meals, winter squash contributes to the "Red/Orange" vegetable sub-group.
- Vegetables must be fresh, frozen, canned, or full-strength vegetable juice, referred to as 100% juice, to credit as a vegetable component. Dried vegetables, including beans, peas, and lentils, must be reconstituted to credit toward reimbursable meals. Please confirm crediting requirements for dried vegetables with your specialist.



Delicata squash, credit: WSDA

## Nutrition Facts

Winter squash is a good source of vitamin A, which is important for eyesight, skin, and cell growth, and vitamin C, which helps with healing, keeps skin and gums healthy, and supports immune function. Winter squash also comes packed with fiber, which is important for maintaining a healthy heart and digestive system and regulating blood sugar.



## Selection and Storage

- Choose squash that has a firm exterior and no soft spots or cracks. Unlike some fruits that develop a softer exterior as they ripen, the rind of winter squash becomes even firmer as they mature.
- The skin should be matte and hard to pierce with your fingernail, not shiny and soft, which would indicate an unripe squash. A squash with soft areas or a moldy stem is well past its prime. Try the tap test. Knock on the skin with a knuckle: if it sounds hollow, it is ripe; if it sounds dull, the squash may be unripe or spoiled.
- Store whole squash in a dark, dry, and cool place (50 to 55 degrees F).

## Culinary Tips

- Rinse squash under running water before peeling or cutting.
- Squash can be cut in advance of cooking. Cut squash will last in the refrigerator for up to one week.
- Freeze cooked squash for longer storage. Pack recipe-sized amounts in airtight containers and use within eight to 12 months.
- Don't forget to make use of winter squash seeds! Toss one cup dry seeds with two teaspoons vegetable oil and seasonings of your choice and bake at 350 degrees F for 15 to 25 minutes, stirring occasionally, until golden.

## Recipes

- [Creamy Chicken Pasta with Roasted Squash and Broccoli Wisconsin Recipe for Schools](#)
- [Squish Squash Lasagna USDA Recipe for Schools](#)
- [Local Harvest Bake USDA Recipe for Child Care Centers](#)
- [Roasted Spaghetti Squash With Tomato Sauce USDA Recipe for Child Care Centers](#)
- [Local Harvest Bake USDA Recipe for Adults in CACFP](#)

## Sourcing

- [Find winter squash](#)



Spaghetti squash, credit: WSDA



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