

LEARN

facts



Butternut

- Spanish translation: *La calabaza de invierno* • Hmong translation: *Taub Meskas Loj*
- Winter squash is native to Central America and has been consumed by people for over 10,000 years.
- In Aztec, Incan, Mayan, and Native American cultures, squash was grown in companionship with corn and beans. Squash, corn, and beans make up the traditional "Three Sisters".
- Winter squash is a traditional food prepared and consumed by Native American people and nations in Wisconsin.
- The name "winter squash" comes from the fact that these squashes can be stored throughout winter. Unlike summer squash, they form a tough rind, which helps them store longer.
- Popular varieties of winter squash include acorn, butternut, delicata, Hubbard, kabocha, spaghetti, and even pumpkin!



Delicata



Acorn

EAT

nutrition & seasonality



• Key nutrients:

Vitamin A - Keeps skin and bones healthy, resists and fights infection, and maintains good eyesight.

Vitamin C - Helps wounds heal, is important for the immune system, and is an antioxidant, which protects cells from damage.

Vitamin B6 - Important for immune system and brain function and helps you get energy from your food.

- Fresh winter squash grown in Wisconsin are available from September through November. When properly stored, winter squash can last throughout the winter.

TASTE

taste testing



Winter squash tastes delicious roasted in the oven. Cube squash, toss in olive oil, season with salt and pepper, and roast at 400°F for about 25-30 minutes.

Squash with thinner skin, like delicata and sweet dumpling, can be eaten without being peeled. Other winter squash, like butternut or acorn, have a hard rind that does not taste very good.

Squash seeds also make a delicious snack! Wash and dry the seeds with a paper towel. Spread in a single layer on a baking sheet, drizzle with oil using your hands to coat the seeds, sprinkle with a pinch of salt and desired seasonings. Roast at 300°F for about 20-25 minutes.



FUN



Nutritious,
Delicious,
Wisconsin!

activity: Winter Squash Exploration

Objective: Kids will explore different varieties of winter squash.

Supplies: Several varieties of winter squash, including Hubbard, butternut, delicata, buttercup, or spaghetti squashes.

Procedure: Show kids different varieties of winter squash. Ask kids to make observations about the outward appearance of the squash. What color do you see? Is it smooth or bumpy? Is it big or small? Is it round or oval? How does it smell? Ask kids to predict what the squash looks like on the inside. Have them write their predictions down on a piece of paper. Cut open each squash and let the kids observe what they look like on the inside. Write down the color, the texture, seed quantity, etc. End this activity with a tasting of one or more varieties of winter squash.

— Credit: Dawn Doperalski, Health and Well-Being Educator

This activity can be done in multiple settings: classroom, outdoors, garden, or virtual.

Tips for adapting to virtual learning: This activity is simple to do in a home environment if kids have access to winter squash. If this is not feasible, provide pictures of the insides and outsides of a few varieties of winter squash. Ask kids to match the inside to the outside of each squash for a fun game.

Share pictures and engage with the Wisconsin Harvest of the Month community by using #WIHarvestoftheMonth on social media.

READ



books

- *The Little Squash Seed* by Gayla Scales
- *Pumpkin Pumpkin* by Jeanne Titherington
- *Too Many Pumpkins* by Linda White
- *Sophie's Squash*
by Pat Zietlow Miller & Anne Wilsdorf
- *Mrs. McNosh and the Great Big Squash*
by Sarah Weeks



planting

Squash is a tender vegetable and enjoys warm weather. Plant seeds outside when the soil warms and all danger of frost has passed. Try planting a Three Sisters garden. Growing squash with corn and beans benefits all three plants. This is a sustainable gardening practice common in Native American communities. Corn provides support for the beans, which help absorb nitrogen from the air to make rich soil for the squash. The leaves of the squash provide shade, which prevent weeds from growing and keep pests away.

harvesting

Harvest winter squash whenever the fruits turn a deep, solid color and the rind is hard. Harvesting usually happens in September or October before heavy frosts. Cut squash from the vine carefully leaving about two inches of stem attached.