

Winter Squash: Nutrient Powerhouse

Both summer and winter squash are available year-round, but in the depths of winter, it feels good to turn on the oven and roast some squash or make it into a delicious, smooth-textured soup. There are several different varieties of winter squash, and what they all have in common is an inedible, hard outer rind and large seeds. Most winter squash have orange-colored flesh, which means that they're an especially rich source of vitamin A and beta-carotene, antioxidants that play an important role in healthy bones, vision, and a great immune system. ½ cup serving of winter squash on average contains 38 calories, 9 grams carbohydrate, 3 grams fiber, less than 1 gram fat and 1 gram protein.

Some Favorite Winter Squashes

Acorn Squash	Small and round, the acorn squash is often sliced in half and baked. It's a good source of potassium, magnesium, thiamin, and vitamin B6.
Banana Squash	Two to three feet long and shaped like a banana, this squash has a slightly sweet taste. Roast it in the oven and serve cubed, or mash it as you would mash sweet potatoes.
Butternut Squash	Its beige-colored outer rind is softer than other types of squash, which makes butternut squash easier to peel. The flesh is often roasted or used in soups. ½ cup provides 25% of your daily vitamin C needs.
Buttercup Squash	This squash is sweeter than many other varieties, and can be used to replace sweet potatoes. It also makes a delicious soup when roasted, pureed, and combined with chicken stock, salt, pepper, and thyme.
Carnival Squash	A type of acorn squash, a carnival squash has flesh that is more yellow colored. Mash cooked squash with apple juice, cinnamon, and nutmeg for a delicious, sweet-tasting side dish without any added sugar.
Delicata Squash	This squash has a thinner, edible outer skin and a creamy flesh. You can roast them in the oven and top with a little cinnamon for a winter treat.
Hubbard Squash	One of the largest types of squash, hubbard squash has an extra hard skin that allows it to be stored at 50-55 degrees for up to 6 months. It's a good source of Vitamin C and potassium.
Spaghetti Squash	When cooked, the flesh of the spaghetti squash separates into spaghetti-like strands and can be used in place of pasta. It's lower in total calories and carbohydrate than other types of winter squash, with only 20 calories per ½ cup serving.