



## EAT MORE SQUASH!

Squash are among the most versatile and affordable veggies.



### A SQUASH FOR EVERY SEASON

Look for squash varieties that are in season in your local area to get the best flavor and pricing. Some of these varieties are actually grown year round in certain locations!

Common **“WINTER SQUASH”** include:



Acorn

Butternut

Delicata

Spaghetti

Sugar Pumpkins

Common **“SUMMER SQUASH”** include:



Yellow

Crookneck

Zucchini

Pattypan

TRY THEM ALL!

### HERE'S THE SKINNY ON SQUASH:

- Almost every part of a squash plant can be eaten, including leaves, blossoms and seeds, although people usually prefer to peel thick-skinned winter varieties.
- Winter squash seeds, including butternut and pumpkin, provide protein and iron.
- Summer squash varieties are especially valued for being low in calories.
- The nutrition profile of each squash variety is somewhat different. Generally, squash provide fiber and a range of vitamins and phytonutrients, usually vitamins A, C and B6, as well as lutein, which supports eye health.
- Winter squash are especially valued as a source of beta-carotene (usually the darker the color of the flesh, the more it contains).
- Pumpkins, squash and gourds are all part of the same botanical family, Cucurbita, which also includes melons and cucumbers.

### GO A STEP FURTHER

Try squash substitutions!

YUM!

Squash can be a vitamin-rich, lower-calorie substitute for white potatoes or pasta in a variety of dishes. Here are a few ideas, but don't let us squash your creativity—experiment with substitutions!

- Replace spaghetti noodles with spaghetti squash. Just steam it, scrape out the stringy flesh, and toss gently with your favorite pasta sauce.
- Serve mashed butternut squash instead of mashed potatoes. (Tastes great on shepherd's pie.)
- Replace cubed or sliced white potatoes with butternut squash in casseroles and gratins.
- Make “hash browns” with grated summer squash.
- Use ½”-thick strips of sliced zucchini in lasagna to replace some or all of the noodles.

### TIPS FOR PARENTS

Get the whole family to nosh on squash.

- If kids aren't excited about squash, start out with the sweeter varieties, such as butternut or acorn.
- Add puréed squash to pancake batter or muffin recipes for extra nutrition.
- Grilling squash can help bring out its natural sweetness.
- Summer squash can be enjoyed raw or cooked. Let kids try them both ways. Put thinly sliced summer squash on pizza. Make squash “chips” by slicing raw summer squash and serving them with dip (see *Better Bites: Use Your Bean* for ideas).
- Acorn and butternut squash can be cooked quickly in the microwave. Simply cut in half, scoop out seeds, cover in plastic wrap and microwave on high, checking every few minutes, until tender. Scoop out flesh and enjoy!
- Kids usually get excited to try foods they've grown, and squash are relatively easy to grow in raised garden beds. Give it a try!

## HANDS-ON ACTIVITY Which squash floats your boat?

Try this buoyancy experiment with different sizes and shapes of squash to find out if you get different results.

### Step 1

**Make a prediction.**

Do you think the squash will sink or float? Why or why not? Write down your hypothesis (what you predict will happen).

### Step 2

**Test your hypothesis.**

One at a time, place each whole squash in the water and see what happens. Is it what you expected?

### Step 3

**Analyze results.**

Which types of squash sink or float? Does size or shape have an effect? Cut the squash in half lengthwise (with adult help). What do you see inside and does this have an effect? Write down your observations and questions.

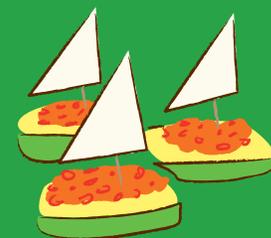
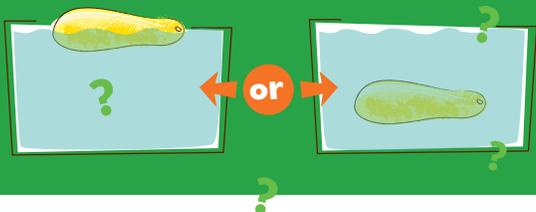
### Step 4

**Draw a conclusion.**

What caused the results? If you're not sure, make a guess, then check the library and the Internet for the correct answer. (Hint: Don't judge a book—or a squash—by its cover. It's what's on the inside that counts.)

### Step 5

Use your halved squash to make one of the recipes below!



## RECIPES

Let kids help with the simple steps in **bold**!

### BREAKFAST

#### Butternut Squash or Pumpkin Pancakes

Hide nutritious winter squash in a kid-friendly breakfast with flavor similar to pumpkin pie.

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1 cup canned butternut squash or pumpkin purée | ¼ teaspoon baking soda      |
| 2 eggs   | ¼ teaspoon vanilla          |
| 2 tablespoons almond butter                    | dash of cinnamon (optional) |
| 2 tablespoons flour                            | maple syrup (optional)      |

Step 1: Heat skillet or griddle over medium-high heat. **Step 2: Combine all ingredients in a small bowl with a wire whisk or fork.** Step 3: Grease a medium skillet with cooking spray, then pour batter to make pancakes desired size. Flip when they begin to bubble. Serve with maple syrup if desired.

### LUNCH

#### Butternut Squash Soup

This sweet soup has a velvety, smooth texture. Tastes good hot or room temperature, so it's great for the lunchbox.

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 butternut squash, peeled and seeded | 6 cups vegetable or chicken broth              |
| 2–3 tablespoons water                 | dash of paprika, nutmeg or cinnamon (optional) |
| 1 medium onion, chopped               | salt and pepper to taste                       |

Step 1: Slice squash in half lengthwise and use a spoon to scoop out the seeds and membranes. Next peel and cut the squash into 1-inch chunks. Step 2: Heat a large stock pot on medium-high. **Add the onions**

**to the pan and cook, stirring constantly, for about one minute. Then add water and continue stirring constantly to “steam-fry” onions until they are tender and translucent (about 2–3 minutes).** Step 3: Add squash and broth and bring to a simmer. Cook, stirring occasionally, until squash is tender, approximately 15–20 minutes. Step 4: Using a slotted spoon, transfer squash chunks to a blender, purée and then return to the pot. Stir, season to taste and serve!

Watch a complete steam-frying demonstration at [www.wholekidsfoundation.org/schools/programs/healthy-teachers](http://www.wholekidsfoundation.org/schools/programs/healthy-teachers)

### DINNER

#### Summer Squash Boats *Makes 4 boats*

Make your favorite summer squash into a colorful main dish.

- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 2 zucchini or yellow squash | 1 tablespoon Italian seasoning (basil, oregano, thyme) |
| 1 teaspoon olive oil        | ¼ cup grated cheddar or parmesan cheese (optional)     |
| ¼ cup yellow onion, diced   | salt and pepper to taste                               |
| 1 red bell pepper, diced    |  |
| 2 garlic cloves, minced     |  |

Step 1: Preheat oven to 375°. Slice squash in half lengthwise. Scoop out a few spoonfuls of flesh from the center of squash, place it in a medium bowl and set aside. **Step 2: Brush the cut side of squash halves lightly with olive oil and arrange, cut side up, on a baking dish.** Bake for about 8–10 minutes or until squash is slightly tender. Step 3: Heat 1 teaspoon of oil in a skillet on medium-high and sauté onions, peppers, garlic and Italian seasoning for 2–3 minutes until slightly tender. **Step 4: Add onion and peppers to the bowl with the squash mixture, stir in half of the grated cheese, mix well and add salt and pepper to taste.** **Step 5: Spoon the mixture into the squash halves, sprinkle with remaining cheese** and return to oven. Cook for 5–7 minutes until cheese is melted.