



# Squash



Squash come in many different colors, sizes, and shapes. They have a rind (thick skin) that protects the fleshy part of the vegetable. The center has seeds which are usually scooped out before eating.

## Nutrition Facts:

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- High in vitamin C

## Varieties

Squash are commonly divided into two groups:

- **Summer squash:** the rinds are rich in beta-carotene and can be eaten. Zucchini is the most popular variety in the United States.
- **Winter squash:** usually have a hard rind which is not eaten. Some popular varieties are pumpkin, butternut, acorn, and spaghetti squash.

Squash are vegetables. Depending on the variety, they either grow on vines or bushes.

Squash originated in North America over 5,000 years ago. It was one of the “three sisters” planted by Native Americans, along with maize (corn) and beans. Squash was grown and eaten by early Europeans who settled in America.

Squash are in the same gourd family as melons and cucumbers.



## Uses

Squash is often cooked, but some summer squash may be eaten raw (try with vegetable dip or add to salads). You may **steam, sauté, grill, or bake squash**. Add to stir-fries, soups, and casseroles. Bake in breads, cakes, and pies. Sometimes the seeds are eaten.

**Squash are grown in Maine!**

Pick a **better snack**™



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# Winter Squash

Winter squash includes **pumpkin, spaghetti squash, acorn squash, butternut squash, and more!** Each type of squash has a different shape, color, size, and flavor, but all have hard shells that allow winter squash to last a long time.

Winter squash are delicious, easy to store, easy to cook, and offer health benefits that may help reduce the risk of disease.

## Selection

Choose a squash with a **deep color** that feels heavy for its size. Check that the **stem** is firm and dry and that the **skin** is free of cuts and soft spots.

## Uses

Winter squash can be **baked, boiled, or steamed**. Rinse the squash under water before it is peeled or cut. The quickest and healthiest way to prepare winter squash is to **steam** it. If you choose to steam squash, peel it, remove the seeds, cut into cubes, and steam for about seven minutes. If you **bake** your squash, it doesn't need to be peeled. Remove the ends and cut the squash in half lengthwise down the middle. Pierce the meat of the squash a few times with a fork and bake in a pan until tender. The seeds and skin can be easily removed after it has been baked.

Squash is full of nutrients!

## Nutrition Facts:

- Fat free
- Cholesterol free
- Sodium free
- Good source of fiber
- Good source of vitamin A and C

