

Family Fun with Winter Squash

Fall is a wonderful season for families to enjoy together. From apple picking and pumpkin patches to celebrating the garden harvest, autumn offers many ways to get kids involved in the kitchen. The colorful days of fall bring not only crisp air but also the sweet and spicy aromas that can make your home feel cozy and inviting.

One of the stars of the season is winter squash—a group of hearty vegetables harvested in the fall. Popular varieties include pumpkin, spaghetti squash, acorn squash, and butternut squash.

Apple Filled Squash

- 1 acorn squash (about 1 pound)
 - 1 apple
 - 2 teaspoons melted butter or margarine
 - 2 teaspoons brown sugar
 - 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon
 - 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
 - Dash ground cloves
1. Wash hands with soap and water. Heat oven to 350°F. Coat a 1-quart baking dish with cooking spray. Scrub squash with a clean vegetable brush under running water. Halve squash and remove seeds. Place halves, skin side up, in dish and cover; bake 30 minutes. Gently rub apple under cold running water. Peel, core and chop apple. In medium bowl, combine apple, butter, brown sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves.
 2. Turn cut sides of acorn squash up and top with apple mixture. Cover and bake 30 minutes longer or until apples are tender. Makes 4 servings. Each serving contains: 90 calories, 2g fat, 24mg sodium, 20g carbohydrate, 5g fiber, 1g protein. Recipe adapted from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.



Selecting winter squash:

- Look for squash with a deep, rich color that feels heavy for its size.
- Avoid squash with soft skin that can be easily scratched by a fingernail—this means it wasn't fully mature.
- A good squash will have a firm, dry, rounded stem.

Winter squash is not only delicious but also long-lasting. When stored in a cool, dry place (55–60°F), it can keep for up to three months.

Cook and puree squash to freeze for later use in soups, sauces, or stews—making it a versatile ingredient for cozy fall meals.

Source: Winter Squash, SNAP-Ed Connection: <https://go.unl.edu/usda-squash>

For more information check out Food Fun for Young Children at: <https://go.unl.edu/food-fun>. This newsletter was originally written by Amy Peterson and has been peer-reviewed. It was updated in 2025.

