



Foods of the Month Newsletter

OCTOBER: WINTER SQUASH

As mentioned in the *August Commit to Health FoM Newsletter* about Summer Squash, **Squash** are fleshy vegetables protected by a hard rind that come in two main groups – summer and **winter squash** (squash are available year round). **Winter squash** is allowed to mature fully before it is harvested and has a hard shell with a tougher, yellow to orange colored flesh. Unlike summer squash, the rind of **winter squash** should not be eaten due to its thickness and hardness. **Winter squash** come in many shapes and colors – check out acorn squash, buttercup squash, and even pumpkins (yes, they are a type of squash!).

CHECK OUT THE VARIETIES OF HEALTHY WINTER SQUASH DESCRIBED BELOW!

 Acorn Squash	One of the most widely available among the small winter squash. It measures about six inches around and weighs one to two pounds. Baking is an excellent way to bring out the flavors of this squash.
 Spaghetti Squash	This oval-shaped yellow squash is also called the “vegetable spaghetti.” When cooked, the crisp, tender, spaghetti-like strands yield a mild lightly sweet and fresh taste. Keep in mind that the larger the vegetable, the thicker the strands and the more flavorful the taste.
 Buttercup Squash	Its popularity stems from its sweet and creamy orange flesh. When baked or steamed it tastes similar to a mixture of honey, roasted chestnuts, and sweet potato!
 Butternut Squash	Measures about a foot long and weighs an average of two to four pounds. Its popularity is due to its meaty, yet moderately sweet golden orange flesh. Baking enhances its sweet, moist, and nutty flavors.



Winter Squash Tips

- When selecting winter squash, look for a hard, tough rind with the stem still attached; select one that seems heavy for its size!
- Avoid a tender rind (which means it is not ripe), and squash with cuts, punctures, or moldy spots on the rind.
- Winter squash can keep up to *3 months* if stored in a dry, cool place! And frozen cooked squash stays fresh for up to *a year*.
- For a quick side dish, grate, peel, or dice winter squash (of your choice), then sauté squash in a broth or oil until desired doneness (~8 mins) - then season with salt and pepper!

Winter Squash Recipe!

PUMPKIN SOUP – PERFECT ON A CHILLY DAY!

Makes 6-8 servings

Ingredients

1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 medium onion, chopped
4 garlic cloves
4 sweet potatoes, cut into large chunks
4 sliced carrots
2 peeled, sliced large apples (another October FoM!)
1 tbsp ginger, fresh
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp cinnamon, finely ground
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp nutmeg, finely ground
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp seasoned salt
6 cups vegetable or chicken broth, low-sodium
20 oz. of 100% canned pumpkin

Heat oil in a large pot. Add the onion, garlic cloves, potatoes, carrots, apples, and ginger and cook until onions are transparent, stirring often. Add cinnamon, nutmeg, salt, broth, and pumpkin to the pot and cover and let simmer for 20 minutes. Strain vegetables and fruit from pot, then puree these in a blender. Put the puree back into pot with liquid. Stir and serve.

Winter Squash Recipes!

SPAGHETTI SQUASH

Makes 6 servings

Ingredients

1 **spaghetti squash**, halved lengthwise, seeds removed
2 tbsp vegetable oil
1 onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, minced (or 1 tsp prepared, minced garlic)
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups chopped tomatoes (or two 14.5 cans of chopped tomatoes, drained)
Salt and pepper to taste
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup crumbled reduced fat feta cheese
3 tbsp sliced black olives
2 tbsp chopped fresh basil

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease a baking sheet, perhaps covered in foil for easy clean up. Place spaghetti squash halves cut sides down on the prepared baking sheet, and bake 30 minutes in the preheated oven, or until a sharp knife can be inserted into inside flesh with only a little resistance. Remove squash from oven, and set aside to cool enough to be easily handled.

Meanwhile, heat oil in a skillet over medium heat. Sauté onion in oil until tender. Add garlic and sauté for 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in the tomatoes, and cook only until tomatoes are warm. Salt and pepper to taste, making a yummy sauce!

Use a fork to scoop the stringy pulp from the squash and place in a medium bowl. Toss with the sautéed vegetables, feta cheese, olives, and basil. Serve warm.

PUMPKIN DELIGHT – A NO-COOK FUN SNACK! (GREAT FOR CAMP OR AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS, AND FOR PARENTS AND KIDS TO DO AT HOME!)

Makes 36 tastes, 2 T each

Ingredients

2 (15 oz) cans of 100% pumpkin
2 tbsp pumpkin pie spice
1 sleeve lowfat whole grain graham crackers
1 tbsp honey

Place pumpkin in large bowl. Stir pumpkin spice and honey thoroughly into pumpkin. Crumble graham crackers into pumpkin, stir till well blended (will be chunky). Place 2 tbsp of mixture on each plate (or on another graham cracker – enjoy!)