



Harvest of the Month

# WINTER SQUASH



## All About Winter Squash-

With their sprawling vines and bountiful yields, winter squash offers a diverse array of delicious and nutritious options for culinary enthusiasts and gardeners alike.



## Social Science

All of the squash we call Winter Squash originated in Central and South America. They are one of the oldest cultivated crops in the Western hemisphere and are now grown all over the world. Human breeding has developed many varied types across five different species. In the United States, California grows more squash than any other state.



## Botany

The genus *Cucurbita* is a large genus in the family *Cucurbitaceae*. There are five domesticated species in the genera, with most of the common varieties belonging to either *C. pepo*, *C. maxima* or *C. moschata*.

Some of the most notable varieties include pumpkin (*C. pepo*), butternut (*C. moschata*), acorn (*C. pepo*), spaghetti (*C. pepo*), hubbard (*C. maxima*), kabocha (*C. maxima*) and delicata (*C. pepo*).

The name "winter squash" became popular because all these varieties develop a tough rind at maturity that allows them to be stored for a long time after harvest, making them a reliable food source through the winter.

Calabaza de Invierno means winter squash in Spanish.



## Nutrition

Winter squash is a wonderful source of fiber, vitamin B6, vitamin C, and Vitamin A. They also contain as much potassium per serving as a banana.

## Creating With Winter Squash

Transform winter squash into festive decorations by carving intricate designs on their surfaces. The naturally robust and varied shapes of squash provide a unique canvas for creating eye-catching seasonal ornaments. Illuminate your carved squash creations with candles or LED lights to add a warm and inviting touch to your festive decor.



## Growing Tips



### Planting Preparation:

Winter squash plants, despite their name, do not like cold weather so wait to plant until well after the last frost date. Most varieties are ready in 90-100 days, so a common rule of thumb is to plant around the summer solstice so you can harvest right around the autumnal equinox.

### Proper Spacing and Care:

Make sure you check your seed packet or plant tag for information on the size of the mature plant of the variety you are growing. Some varieties can get very big, sprawling over 6 feet in all directions. There are bush varieties that can be grown in just a couple feet or even in a large container.



### Harvesting Tips:

Harvest ripe fruit with hardened skins, cut from the plant leaving a few inches of stem to avoid skin wounds and preserve storage time. Various winter squash varieties need different curing times for optimal storage and flavor—kabocha peaks at 2-4 months, acorn in a few weeks, and delicata requires no curing.



## Cooking with Winter Squash



Winter squash can be prepared in many different ways. The most common way to cook it is to roast it, but it can also be baked or boiled. Roasted squash is delicious with many different herbs and spices, eaten as a side dish. But cooked squash can be used to make so many things, from soups to muffins, casseroles to pies.

Squash seeds are also edible, pumpkin seeds being the most common. Any squash seed can be roasted or toasted in a low temperature oven and then used as a snack or garnish.

Squash flowers can be eaten too! One common way to enjoy them is to stuff them with cheese, bread them and fry them.

[For winter squash recipes visit SGN's Cooking From The Garden page](#)