



early childhood

ACTIVITY GUIDE

WINTER SQUASH

LEARN



facts

- Spanish translation: *La calabaza de invierno*
- Hmong translation: *Taub Meskas Loj*
- Winter squash have a thick outer rind that allows them to be stored for a long time without going bad.
- Acorn, butternut, delicata, Hubbard, kabocha, spaghetti, and even pumpkin are types of winter squash.



EAT



Acorn

Delicata

Butternut

nutrition & seasonality

- Winter squash has beta-carotene. Our bodies turn beta-carotene into vitamin A. Vitamin A supports young children's vision and eye health

Share with children: Vitamin A helps our eyes see in the dark.

- Fresh winter squash grown in Wisconsin are available from September through November. When properly stored, winter squash can last throughout the winter.

TASTE

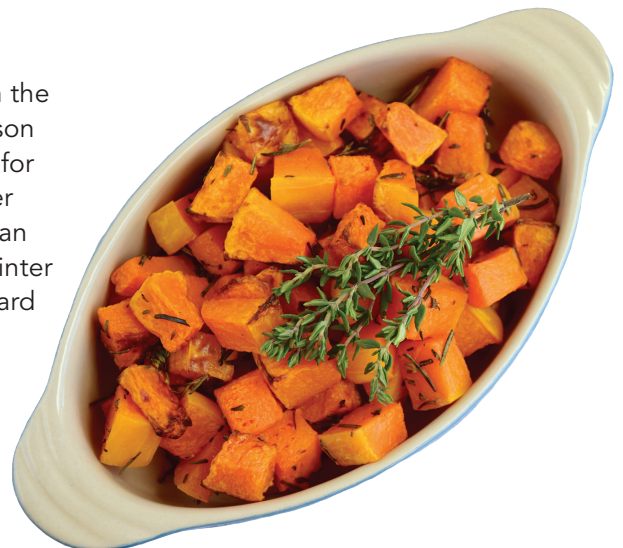


Nutritious,
Delicious,
Wisconsin!

taste testing

Winter squash tastes delicious roasted in the oven. Cube squash, toss in olive oil, season with salt and pepper, and roast at 400°F for about 25-30 minutes. Squash with thinner skin, like delicata and sweet dumpling, can be eaten without being peeled. Other winter squash, like butternut or acorn, have a hard rind that does not taste very good.

Encourage children to use their five senses to observe, smell, feel, listen, and taste the squash.



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FUN



activity: A Look Inside

Gather several different types of winter squash, including Hubbard, butternut, delicata, buttercup, or spaghetti squashes.

Have children gather around the area with the winter squash and a cutting board. Review with children how to be safe around sharp knives: only adults use them, children keep their hands away, and do not touch sharp knives.

Tell children you have winter squash to share today.

Cut the winter squash in half to reveal the inside. Let the children know they will get to touch the inside if they want to a little later. Cut one half of the winter squash into small wedges with the skin and seeds intact. On a plate, give each child a small wedge of squash to look at, touch, and smell.

Talk with the children about the inside of the winter squash. Ask the following questions and any additional questions if you like.

- What color is the inside of the squash?
- What does the inside of the squash look like?
- How does the inside feel?
- How does the squash smell?

— Adapted from U.S. Department of Agriculture, Team Nutrition.
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Provided by FoodWise.

Share pictures and engage with the Wisconsin Harvest of the Month community by using #WIHarvestoftheMonth on social media.



READ



books

- *The Little Squash Seed* by Gayla Scale
- *Pumpkin Pumpkin* by Jeanne Titherington
- *Sophie's Squash* by Pat Zietlow
- *Too Many Pumpkins* by Linda White
- *How Many Seeds in a Pumpkin* by Brian Karas
- *Pumpkin Circle: The Story of a Garden* by George Levenson
- *We Eat Food That's Fresh!* by Angela Russ-Ayon

GARDEN CONNECTION

planting

Squash is a tender vegetable and enjoys warm weather. Plant seeds outside when the soil warms and all danger of frost has passed. Try planting a Three Sisters garden. Growing squash with corn and beans benefits all three plants. This is a sustainable gardening practice common in Native American communities. Corn provides support for the beans, which help absorb nitrogen from the air to make rich soil for the squash. The leaves of the squash provide shade, which prevent weeds from growing and keep pests away.

harvesting

Harvest winter squash whenever the fruits turn a deep, solid color and the rind is hard. Harvesting usually happens in September or October before heavy frosts. Cut squash from the vine carefully leaving about two inches of stem attached.