



Using, Storing and Preserving



Winter Squash

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Michigan Fresh: Using, Storing and Preserving Winter Squash was first published in April 2012 and revised in May 2023. Information in the 2012 version was based on *Winter Squash* (2006) (Food Preservation Series). It replaced *Winter Squash* (2006) (WO1052) (Using, Storing and Preserving Series).

Michigan-grown winter squash is available September through November.

Food Safety and Storage

- Pick or purchase squash with stems that are not shriveled, blackened or moist.
- Wash hands before and after handling fresh produce.
- Scrub winter squash with a vegetable brush under cool running water before cooking or cutting. Do not use soap. Do not wash squash before storing.
- Keep squash away from raw meat and meat juices to prevent cross-contamination.
- Store whole winter squash in a cool (45 to 50 degrees F.) place. If stored properly, most varieties will keep up to 3 months.
- Store cut squash in the refrigerator and use within a week.
- For best quality and to preserve nutritional value, preserve only what your family can consume in one year.



Yield

1 pound	=	one large acorn squash
One small acorn squash	=	2 half-cup servings
3 pounds winter squash	=	2 pints canned
10 pounds	=	a canner load of 9 pints
16 pounds	=	a canner load of 7 quarts

Lawn or garden questions?

Visit migarden.msu.edu.
Call toll-free 1-888-678-3464.

Find out more about Michigan Fresh at
canr.msu.edu/mi_fresh.

How to Preserve

Canning

Winter squash, cubed

Pressure canning is the **only** safe method of canning winter squash. Winter squash **must** be pressure canned to avoid the potential of the foodborne illness botulism.

Squash should have a hard rind and stringless, mature pulp of ideal quality for cooking fresh.

Wash, remove seeds, cut into 1-inch slices, and peel. Cut flesh into 1-inch cubes. Boil 2 minutes in water.

Caution: Do not mash or puree. Fill hot jars with cubes and cooking liquid, leaving 1-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles; adjust headspace if needed. Wipe jar rims with a clean paper towel, adjust lids and process (see tables that follow for recommended processing times).

Freezing

Winter squash (*acorn, banana, buttercup, butternut, Golden Delicious, Hubbard, spaghetti*)

Select firm, mature squash with a hard rind. For spaghetti squash, mashing the cooked pulp is not necessary.

Cook until soft in boiling water, in steam, in a pressure cooker or in an oven. Remove pulp from rind and mash. To cool, place pan containing winter squash in cold water and stir occasionally. Package leaving ½-inch headspace, remove air, seal, label, date and freeze.

Recommended process time (in minutes) for winter squash in a dial-gauge pressure canner.

			Canner pressure (PSI) at altitudes of			
Style of pack	Jar size	Process time	0 - 2,000 ft	2,001 - 4,000 ft	4,001 - 6,000 ft	6,001 - 8,000 ft
Hot	Pints	55 min	11 lb	12 lb	13 lb	14 lb
	Quarts	90 min	11 lb	12 lb	13 lb	14 lb

Recommended process time (in minutes) for winter squash in a weighted-gauge pressure canner.

			Canner pressure (PSI) at altitudes of	
Style of pack	Jar size	Process time	0-1,000 ft	Above 1,000 ft
Hot	Pints	55 min	10 lb	15 lb
	Quarts	90 min	10 lb	15 lb

Let jars sit undisturbed for 12 to 24 hours, check lids to be sure they've sealed, remove rings, wash jars, date, label and store. Food in jars that do not seal must be reprocessed in a clean jar with a new lid within 24 hours, refrigerated or frozen.

References

Andress, E., & Harrison, J. A. (2014). *So easy to preserve* (Bulletin 989). (6th ed.). University of Georgia Cooperative Extension.

National Center for Home Food Preservation.
<http://nchfp.uga.edu/>