Kentucky Winter Squash

Season: August through October.

Nutrition Facts: Winter squash, which includes acorn squash, butternut squash, pumpkin, and other varieties, is low in fat and sodium. It is an excellent source of vitamin A and fiber.

Selection: Winter squash should be heavy for its size with a hard, tough rind that is free of blemishes or soft spots.

Storage: Store it in a cool, dry place and use it within 1 month.

Preparation: To steam: Wash, peel, and remove seeds. Then cut squash into 2-inch cubes or quarter, leaving rind on (it will remove easily after cooking). Bring 1 inch of water to a boil in a saucepan and place squash on a rack or basket in the pan. Do not immerse it in water. Cover the pan tightly and steam the squash 30 to 40 minutes or until tender.

To microwave: Wash squash and cut it lengthwise. Place it in a baking dish and cover the dish with plastic wrap. Microwave until tender, using these guidelines:
- acorn squash—½ squash, 5 to 8 minutes; 1 squash, 8½ to 11½ minutes.
- butternut squash—2 pieces, 3 to 4½ minutes.
- hubbard squash (½-pound pieces)—2 pieces, 4 to 6½ minutes.

Citrus Squash

2 medium acorn squash
¼ cup unsweetened orange juice
¼ cup unsweetened apple juice
¼ cup brown sugar, firmly packed
1 tablespoon reduced calorie maple syrup
1 tablespoon margarine
1 teaspoon lemon peel, grated

Wash squash and cut it in half. Remove seeds and pulp. Cut each half crosswise into ½-inch slices, arrange the slices in a greased baking dish, and pour the orange and apple juices over the squash. Bake it covered at 350°F for 30 minutes. Combine the remaining ingredients in a small saucepan and bring the sauce mixture to a boil, stirring constantly. Then drizzle the sauce over the squash and bake uncovered for 15 to 20 additional minutes, basting occasionally. Yield: 6 servings (three slices each serving).

Nutritional analysis per serving: 130 calories, 1 g protein, 28 g carbohydrate, 2 g fat, 35 mg sodium.

Prepared by Pam Sigler. Adapted from Kentucky Winter Squash and Pumpkin (FSHE-1), Sandra Bastin, Ph.D., R.D., L.D., Food and Nutrition Extension Specialist.

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