

# North Carolina Harvest of the Month

## STEPS TO HEALTH

The North Carolina Harvest of the Month featured vegetable is



### What Is a Squash?

Squash are members of the gourd family. Winter squash have hard shells, inedible skins, and large seeds.

### Home Grown Facts

Squash and pumpkin are minor crops in North Carolina with most farmers planting them in addition to their main crop. Local squash and pumpkin can be purchased from a roadside market or farmers market in the fall. Visit [www.ncfarmfresh.com](http://www.ncfarmfresh.com) to find one near you!

### How Many Do You See?

Have your children visit a market or agricultural fair to count the number of different varieties and colors of squash!

### BE AN ACTIVE FAMILY!

- Be a role model. Studies show that children who see their parents having fun and being active are more likely to stay active their entire lives.
- Find a local pumpkin farm and take a family walk through the fields.



### Most Common Varieties of Squash

**Acorn**, a smaller, acorn-shaped squash with dark green skin, deep furrows, and yellow-orange flesh.



**Butternut**, a long, pear-shaped squash with tan skin and orange, sweet flesh; the most popular variety.

**Buttercup or Turban**, named for its "wrapped" layers, usually a dark green shell with orange, mealy flesh.



**Hubbard**, a golden or green squash notable for its bumpy, thick skin.

**Pumpkin**, the largest squash variety with bright orange, ribbed skin, and orange flesh. Most varieties are for carving but the Small Sugar can be baked and eaten!



**Spaghetti**, a yellow-skinned squash whose flesh forms translucent spaghetti-like strands when cooked.

### Healthy Serving Ideas

- Bake, boil, roast, sauté, or microwave winter squash. Use it in stews, soups, salads, dips, breads, and even pies.
- Sample different varieties of winter squash to find out your family's favorite.
- Varieties with darker yellow/orange flesh contain more vitamins and minerals than lighter colored squash. For example, butternut squash has over 10 times more Vitamin A and Vitamin C than spaghetti squash.

### Spicy Apple-Filled Squash

**Makes 4 servings.** 1 wedge per serving.

**Cook time:** 70 minutes

#### Ingredients:

- 1 large acorn squash (about 1 pound)
- 1 cup water
- 2 teaspoons butter
- 1 large apple, cored, peeled, chopped
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg

#### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 F.
2. Cut squash in half and scoop out seeds. Place squash, cut side down, in 13 x 9-inch dish.
3. Add water and bake 35 to 45 minutes or until fork-tender.
4. While squash is baking, cook rest of the ingredients in a saucepan over medium heat for 8 minutes or until apple is crisp-tender.
5. Cut each squash half into two pieces and divide apple mixture equally among squash wedges. Return squash to oven. Bake 10 minutes more. Serve hot.

#### Nutrition information per serving:

Calories 99, Carbohydrate 21 g, Dietary Fiber 4 g, Protein 1 g, Total Fat 2 g, Saturated Fat 1 g, Trans Fat 0 g, Cholesterol 5 mg, Sodium 18 mg

Adapted from: *Everyday Healthy Meals, Network for a Healthy California, 2007.*

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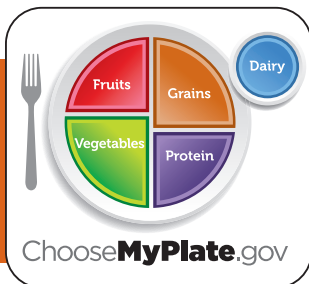
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### Why Focus on Fruits and Vary My Veggies?

- Fruits and vegetables are an important part of an overall healthy, balanced diet.
- Fruits and vegetables, like squash, are also a source of many vitamins and minerals.
- Squash contains iron, calcium, fiber, Vitamin C, and Vitamin A.
- Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables every day to get the nutrients you need to be healthy.
- A good tip to follow is to make half your plate fruits and vegetables to reach your daily needs!

To learn about the other food groups, visit



### How Much Do I Need?

The amount of fruits and vegetables you need depends on your age, gender, and physical activity level. It is important to eat a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables every day to get all the nutrients your body needs. Find out how much each person in your family needs.

### Recommended Daily Amount of Fruits and Vegetables\*

	Kids, Ages 5–12	Teens and Adults, Ages 13 and up
Males	2½–5 cups per day	4½–6½ cups per day
Females	2½–5 cups per day	3½–5 cups per day

\*If you are active, eat the higher number of cups per day. Visit [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov) to learn more.

### Nutrition Facts

Serving Size: ½ cup cooked acorn squash, cubed (103g)	
Calories 57	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 4mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 15g	5%
Dietary Fiber 5g	18%
Sugars 0g	
Protein 1g	
Vitamin A 9%	Calcium 5%
Vitamin C 19%	Iron 5%

### How Much Squash?

- A half cup of cooked squash is about one cupped handful.
- A half cup of winter squash, like butternut, hubbard, and pumpkin, is an excellent source\* of Vitamin A.
- A half cup of winter squash, like acorn and butternut, is an excellent source\* of fiber and Vitamin C.

\*Excellent sources provide at least 20% Daily Value.

### Produce Tips

- Choose squash that are firm, heavy for their size, and have dull skins (not shiny). Winter squash should be hard without cracks or soft spots.
- Store uncut winter squash in a dark, cool, dry place. They can keep up to three months.
- Once cut, squash can keep about one week when wrapped and refrigerated.



### Healthy Serving Ideas

- Roast cubes of butternut squash seasoned with thyme and sage.
- Blend roasted butternut squash cubes in a blender with just enough chicken broth to make a thick and creamy soup.

For more squash recipes, visit [www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov](http://www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov).

**ACTIVE ADULTS:** Make a plan for staying active when the weather gets cold or wet. Figure out how you can be active both indoors and outdoors so that you can stay in control of your fitness goals.