



Brought to you by Viva Vegetables

A Utah State University Extension and Nutrition and Food Sciences Department campaign

The goal of the *How to Nourish With* lesson series is to provide adults and older children with helpful information and demonstrations about selecting, preparing, cooking with, and storing vegetables. This basic knowledge may encourage families to include vegetables more often as a mainstay of family meals and snacks.

Objectives:

1. Adults will explain a health benefit provided by winter squash.
2. Adults will explain how to select winter squash.
3. Adults will discuss cost and time effective strategies for incorporating winter squash into family meals.
4. Adults will discuss preparation and storage techniques of winter squash, including cleaning, trimming, cooking, and storing
5. Adults will make and taste food that includes winter squash.

Total Time: ~1 hour

NOTE: *This lesson is best taught when winter squash is in season (fall, winter).*

Materials

- Acorn squash, cut in half
- Pumpkin, cut in half
- Butternut squash, cut in half
- Spaghetti squash, cut in half
- Turban squash, cut in half
- Hubbard squash, cut in half
- Copies of handouts
- Ingredients for the recipes
- Appropriate utensils, etc. to serve recipes

Preparation Required

- Preheat oven to 350° to roast seeds
- Cut strips of butternut squash for butternut squash fries

*Viva Vegetables: How to Nourish With
Winter Squash*

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- Get prices for different types of winter squash at the local grocery store or market to share with the class.

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LESSON PLAN

*****Put the butternut squash fries in the oven*****

Introduction: Welcome and introspective activity

Time: 5 minutes

- **Ask the class:** What do you think of when you think of winter squash? Answers may include:
 - *Halloween*
 - *Thanksgiving*
 - *Fall*
 - *I don't know what winter squash is.*
- **Ask the class:** What is the difference between summer and winter squash?
 - *Winter squash is harvested in the fall and winter months.*
 - *Winter squash is available year round but is hardy enough to survive the winter months because of its thick rind.*
 - *Winter squash is more mature.*
 - *Winter squash includes types like acorn, butternut, kabocha, hubbard.*
 - *Summer squash has a thin skin and is harvested in the summer.*
 - *Summer squash is not as mature and is harvested before the rind can thicken.*
 - *Summer squash is zucchini or yellow crookneck squash.*
- Briefly explain the recipe that you have started and what you have done so far.

Objective 1: Adults will explain a health benefit provided by winter squash.

Activity: Nutrition discussion

Time: 2-3 minutes

- Explain that the most recent dietary guidelines recommend an increased consumption of dark green and orange vegetables. Many winter squash are orange.
- **Ask the class:** Why would this be a recommendation? *Because the color is an outward sign of its nutritional properties.*
- **Ask the class:** What does the deep orange color tell you about the winter squash? What nutrient is it high in?
 - Commend participants for all of their guesses.
 - The correct answer is *beta carotene* or *vitamin A*.
 - Beta carotene is a type of vitamin that turns into vitamin A in our bodies. You can remember that beta carotene is orange by thinking about "carotene" sounding like "carrots" which are also orange.
- **Ask the class:** Why is beta carotene or vitamin A important?
 - *It is important for immune function (health) and skin health.*

*****Flip the fries. *****

Objectives 2, 3, and 4: *Adults will explain how to select the best winter squash; Adults will discuss cost and time effective strategies for incorporating winter squash into family meals; Adults will discuss preparation and storage techniques of winter squash, including cleaning, trimming, cooking, and storing.*

Activity: Discussion and Demonstration

Time: 25 minutes

- **Ask the class:** What are the different kinds of winter squash? How many can you name?
- Walk around the class displaying the squash so that everyone can see. (Show them inside and outside of each squash that you brought as you say it. Show the attached pictures of each type of squash if you are unable to get real winter squash). Answers may include:
- The four squash that are italicized are the most common.
 - *Pumpkin*
 - *Butternut*
 - *Acorn*
 - *Spaghetti*
 - Hubbard
 - Banana
 - Turban
- **Ask the class:** What are the differences and similarities between these different kinds (both inside and outside)?
 - They all have seeds on the inside.
 - The seeds are different shapes and colors.
 - The squash are different shapes and colors.
 - The insides smell similar.
- **Ask the class:** Does anyone have any tips for picking a good squash? Answers may include:
 - *Heavy for its size*
 - *Thick, hard skin*
 - *Skins should have vivid color*
 - *No cracks or soft spots*
 - *When choosing butternut squash, choose one with a long neck and small bulb; it has more meat*
- Mention to the class that uncut winter squash will generally keep for 3-6 months when stored in a cool, dry place. It should be stored in a root cellar or a cool closet that is about 50°. If it is warmer, the squash won't last as long.
- **Ask the class:** What other vegetables can be stored in this way (in a root cellar or cool closet)?
 - Onions
 - Carrots
 - Potatoes
 - Parsnips
- After winter squash is cut, it will last about a week.
- **Ask the class:** What are ways that you have eaten winter squash before?
- **Ask the class:** What ways have you heard of eating winter squash that you would like to try?
- Ways to add winter squash to meals:
 - Add grated, canned, or leftover cooked squash to muffins or breads.
 - Sample a variety of winter squash and find out which is your family's favorite.
 - Puree winter squash as a base for a thick, hearty soup. Add other vegetables like potatoes, corn, and carrots.
 - Sprinkle a little bit of cinnamon on your squash.
 - Cut squash in half and stuff with other ingredients like rice, corn or beans.
 - Find a dessert recipe that uses winter squash.

- Make fries out of butternut squash.
- Put butter and a little salt and pepper on squash and eat as a side dish.
- Add squash to rice dishes, like a risotto.
- **Ask the class:** What forms does squash come in?
 - Most squash is raw in the grocery store.
 - Pumpkin is the only canned winter squash.
 - Winter squash can be frozen for consumption but is not extremely common in grocery stores.
 - You can freeze winter squash yourself by cooking it first and then putting it in containers in the freezer.
- Explain to the class that, because raw is the main form of squash, it is important to know how to cut into one, especially into a hard butternut.
 - Explain that for most squash, all you really need is a big, sharp knife.
 - Take the acorn squash and explain that you used a sharp knife to cut it in half. Explain that you can stuff the insides after scooping out the seeds or scoop out the meat and just use the shell to stuff. Either way, the meat can and should be eaten! After all, that's why you buy winter squash.
 - Take the butternut squash and explain that you can do the following so it is easier to manage:
 - Poke several holes into the whole squash with a fork.
 - Microwave for about 5 minutes or until it is slightly soft.
 - Allow to cool so you don't burn yourself.
 - Peel the hard rind off of the outside of the winter squash.
 - Cut in half and remove the seeds, then cut into cubes.
 - You can save the seeds to roast as a snack.
 - From there, you can cut it into strips for fries, mash it, puree it, or cut it into cubes.
- Tell the class that you will briefly explain how to prepare squash.
 - Microwave:
 - Take half of an acorn squash, wrap it in saran wrap and microwave for about 5 minutes.
 - This will create some steam, so be careful when removing the saran wrap.
 - Baking:
 - Put halves or pieces on a baking sheet without peeling.
 - Place in 400° oven for 40-50 minutes or until tender.
 - Scoop out the meat or eat straight from the rind.
 - Roast:
 - Roast skinned chunks with other vegetables by coating them with a little bit of olive oil and some seasonings. Place in a 400° oven for 40-50 minutes or until tender.
 - Put halves or pieces on a baking sheet with the flesh side down.
 - Boil:
 - Cut into small chunks and boil until tender for use as a mash, etc.
 - Sauté:
 - Put a little olive oil in a pan and sauté thin squash slices

Objective 5: Adults will make and taste something that includes winter squash.

Activity: Demonstrate butternut squash fries

Demonstrate roasted squash seeds

Time: 10-20 minutes

- Pass out the butternut squash fries for participants to eat while you are demonstrating the other recipe.
- Ask class members to help you clean out the insides of the halves of the squash that you brought.
- Follow the recipe and make several kinds of seeds for the class to try.
- While you are waiting for them to cook, **ask the class:** What are some ways you can use the seeds of squash in your meals?
 - Add to a salad
 - Eat as a snack
 - Add to trail mix
- Explain the butternut squash fries recipe if you didn't do it before.
- While you are waiting for the seeds to cook, move on to the summary and regroup section.

Conclusion: Summary and Regroup

Time: 5 minutes

- **Ask the class:** What is some new information that you learned that will help your family eat squash?
- **Ask the class:** What kind of meal or recipe are you going to try that includes squash?
- Thank the participants for attending.

TYPES OF WINTER SQUASH



PUMPKIN



ACORN



BUTTERNUT



SPAGHETTI



TURBAN



HUBBARD