

Family Fun in the Fall

Article written by Amy Peterson, MS, RD

Fall is a fun time for families - picking apples, selecting pumpkins, and celebrating the garden harvest is a great way to get your child involved in the kitchen and cooking with you. Use these colorful days of autumn to focus on the harvest and enjoy the sweet and spicy aromas of fall that can fill your kitchen on a cool November day!

DID YOU KNOW?

"Squash", one of the oldest known crops, comes from the Narragansett Native American word askutasquash, which means "eaten raw or uncooked." While summer squash such as zucchini is often eaten uncooked, winter squash is always cooked before eating.



Apple Filled Squash

- 1 acorn squash (about 1 pound)
- 1 apple
- 2 teaspoons melted butter or margarine
- 2 teaspoons brown sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
- Dash ground cloves



1. Wash hands with soap and water. Heat oven to 350°F. Coat a 1-quart baking dish with cooking spray. Scrub squash with a clean vegetable brush under running water. Halve squash and remove seeds. Place halves, skin side up, in dish and cover; bake 30 minutes. Gently rub apple under cold running water. Peel, core and chop apple. In medium bowl, combine apple, butter, brown sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves.
2. Turn cut sides of acorn squash up; top with apple mixture. Cover and bake 30 minutes longer or until apples are tender. Makes 4 servings. Each serving contains: 88 calories, 3 g fat, 17 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, 24

Sources:

1. Fall Cooking, Nebraska Extension: <http://go.unl.edu/ikcz>
2. Healthy Cooking with Spices and Herbs, Nebraska Extension: <http://go.unl.edu/z2gb>

Qualities to look for when choosing a winter squash:

- Select a squash that has a deep color and is heavy for its size.
- Skin that is easily nicked or scraped with a fingernail means that the squash did not reach maturity
- Stem should be firm, rounded, and dry.

Winter squash has a long shelf life and if kept in a cool, dry place between 55 and 60°F, will store for up to 3 months. Cooked, pureed squash can be frozen and used later for soups, sauces, or stews.

For more information check out Food Fun for Young Children at: <http://go.unl.edu/chi>