

Strengthening Families

Cumberland County Center

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Preparing Turkey Safely

Right Size Turkey

Use this chart as a helpful guide:

- Whole bird - 1 pound per person
- Boneless turkey breast - 1/2 pound per person
- Turkey breast - 3/4 pound per person
- Frozen pre-stuffed - 1 1/4 pounds per person

Safe Thawing

Turkey must be kept at a safe temperature (below 40°F) for the big thaw.

Three safe ways to thaw:

1. Refrigerator:

- * Allow 24 hours per five pounds.
- * 8 - 12 pounds = 2 to 3 days
- * 12 - 16 pounds = 3 to 4 days
- * 16 - 20 pounds = 4 to 5 days
- * 20 - 24 pounds = 5 to 6 days

* **Once completely thawed, cook within 1 to 2 days.**

2. Cold Water:

- * Place breast down in its unwrapped wrapper in cold water to cover.
- * Change water every 30 minutes to keep surface cool.
- * Allow 30 minutes per pound.
- * 8 - 12 pounds = 4 to 6 hours
- * 12 - 16 pounds = 6 to 8 hours
- * 16 - 20 pounds = 8 to 10 hours
- * Cook immediately after thawing.

3. Microwave Oven:

- Check your microwave's instruction book.
- Cook immediately after thawing.

To Wash or Not to Wash?

Review of studies from several universities indicates that there is no benefit to washing.

In fact, washing can allow bacteria on meat and poultry to spread to other ready-to-eat foods. Therefore, the USDA does not recommend washing your turkey before cooking. Cooking to proper temperature will destroy any bacteria present.

To Stuff or Not to Stuff?

According to the USDA stuffing a turkey may increase the risk of foodborne illness. The stuffing may not reach 165°F - the temperature needed to kill bacteria present in the stuffing.

It is recommended that stuffing should be cooked outside the bird.

Roasting Tips

- Place turkey breast side up on a rack in a shallow roasting pan (2-2 1/2 inches deep).
- Internal temperature should reach a minimum of 165°F in the thigh and thickest part of the breast before removing from oven. Cooking turkey to higher temperatures yields a golden tender bird. (170° F breast, 180° thigh)
- Let bird stand 20 minutes before carving to allow juices to absorb back into the meat.



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Approximate Cooking Times (fresh or thawed)

For cooking a completely thawed turkey at 325°F.

Weight (pounds)	Unstuffed (hours)	Stuffed (hours)
4 - 6 (breast)	1½ - 2¼	
6 - 8 (breast)	2¼ - 3¼	2½ - 3½
8 - 12	2¾ - 3	3 - 3½
12 - 14	3 - 3¾	3½ - 4
14 - 18	3¾ - 4¼	4 - 4¼
18 - 20	4¼ - 4½	4¼ - 4¾
20 - 24	4½ - 5	4¾ - 5¼

Cooking Partially Thawed or Frozen Turkey

- Remove wrapping before placing in oven.
- Add 50% additional cooking time per above chart.
- After 3½ hours carefully remove giblet package.
- Frozen pre-stuffed turkeys - do not thaw before cooking, follow package directions.



Source: University of Minnesota/Extension

Winter Squash Selection Tips

Winter squash are harvested late summer through fall, then “cured” or “hardened off” in open air to toughen their exterior. This process ensures the squash will keep for months without refrigeration. Squash that has been hurried through this step and improperly cured will appear shiny and may be tender enough to be pierced by your fingernail. When selecting any variety of winter squash, the stem is the best indication of ripeness. Stems should be tan, dry, and on some varieties, look fibrous and frayed, or corky. Fresh green stems and those leaking sap signal that the squash was harvested before it was ready. Ripe squash should have vivid, saturated (deep) color and a matte, rather than glossy finish.



Source: Co+Op Stronger Together

Winter Squash Varieties

Acorn

This forest green, deeply ribbed squash resembles its nickname, the acorn. It has yellow-orange flesh and a tender-firm texture that holds up when cooked. Acorn's mild flavor is versatile, making it a traditional choice for stuffing and baking. The rind is not good for eating, but helps the squash hold its shape when baked.



- Selection: Acorn squash should be uniformly green and matte - streaks/spots of orange are fine, but too much orange indicates over ripeness and the squash will be dry and stringy.
- Best uses: baking, stuffing, mashing.

Blue Hubbard

Good for feeding a crowd, these huge, bumpy textured squash look a bit like a giant gray lemon, tapered at both ends and round in the middle. A common heirloom variety, Blue Hubbard has an unusual, brittle blue-gray outer shell, a green rind, and bright orange flesh. Unlike many other winter squashes, they are only mildly sweet, but have a buttery, nutty flavor and a flaky, dry texture similar to a baked potato.



- Selection: Choose a squash based on size - 1 pound equals approximately 2 cups of chopped squash.
- Best uses: baked or mashed, topped with butter, sea salt, and freshly ground black pepper.

Butternut

These squash are named for their peanut-like shape and smooth, beige coloring. Butternut is a good choice for recipes calling for a large amount of squash because they are dense-the seed cavity is in a small bulb opposite the stem end, so the large stem is solid squash. Their vivid orange flesh is sweet and slightly nutty with a smooth texture that falls apart as it cooks. Although the rind is edible, butternut is usually peeled before use.



- Selection: Choose the amount of squash needed

by weight. One pound of butternut equals approximately 2 cups of peeled, chopped squash.

- Best uses: soups, purees, pies, recipes where smooth texture and sweetness will be highlighted.

Delicata

This oblong squash is butter yellow in color with green mottled striping in shallow ridges. Delicata has a thin, edible skin that is easy to work with but makes it a poor squash for long-term storage; this is why you'll only find them in the fall. The rich, sweet yellow flesh is flavorful and tastes like chestnuts, corn, and sweet potatoes.



- Selection: Because they are more susceptible to breakdown than other winter squash, take care to select squash without scratches or blemishes, or they may spoil quickly.
- Best uses: Delicata's walls are thin, making it a quick-cooking squash. It can be sliced in 1/4 -inch rings and sautéed until soft and caramelized (remove seeds first), halved and baked in 30 minutes, or broiled with olive oil or butter until caramelized.

Heart of Gold/Festival/Carnival

These colorful, festive varieties of squash are all hybrids resulting from a cross between Sweet Dumpling and Acorn, and are somewhere between the two in size. Yellow or cream with green and orange mottling, these three can be difficult to tell apart, but for culinary purposes, they are essentially interchangeable. With a sweet nutty flavor like Dumpling, and a tender-firm texture like Acorn, they are the best of both parent varieties.



- Selection: Choose brightly colored squash that are heavy for their size.
- Best uses: baking, stuffing, broiling with brown sugar.

Kabocha (Green or Red)

Kabocha can be dark green with



Varieties Continued...Plus Recipe

striping, or a deep red-orange color that resembles Red Kuri. You can tell the difference between red Kabocha and Red Kuri by their shape. Kabocha is round but flattened at the stem end, instead of pointed. The flesh is smooth, dense, and intensely yellow. They are similar in sweetness and texture to a sweet potato.

- Selection: Choose heavy, blemish free squash. They may have a golden or creamy patch where they rested on the ground.
- Best Uses: curries, soups, stir-fry, salads.

Pie Pumpkin

Pie pumpkins differ from larger carving pumpkins in that they have been bred for sweetness and not for size. They are uniformly orange and round with an inedible rind, and are sold alongside other varieties of winter squash. These squash are mildly sweet and have a rich pumpkin flavor that is perfect for pies and baked goods. They make beautiful centerpieces when hollowed out and filled with pumpkin soup.

- Selection: Choose a pie pumpkin that has not hint of green and still has a stem attached; older pumpkins may lose their stems.
- Best uses: pies, custards, baked goods, curries and stews.



Red Kuri

These vivid orange, beta carotene-saturated squash are shaped like an onion, or teardrop. They have a delicious chestnut-like flavor, and are mildly sweet with a dense texture that holds shape when steamed or cubed, but smooth and velvety when pureed, making them quite versatile.

- Selection: Select a smooth, uniformly colored squash with no hint of green.



- Best Uses: Thai curries, soups, pilafs and gratins, baked goods.

Spaghetti

These football-sized, bright yellow squash are very different from other varieties in this family. Spaghetti squash has a pale golden interior, and is stringy and dense in a good way! After sliced in half and baked, use a fork to pry up the strands of flesh and you will see it resembles and has the texture of perfectly cooked spaghetti noodles. These squash are not particularly sweet but have a mild flavor that takes a wide variety of preparations.

- Selection: choose a bright yellow squash that is free of blemishes and soft spots.
- Best uses: baked and separated, then mixed with pesto, tomato sauce, or your favorite pasta topping.



Sweet Dumpling

These small, four-to-six-inch round squash are cream-colored with green mottles streaks and deep ribs similar to Acorn. Pale gold on the inside, with a dry, starchy flesh similar to a potato, these squash are renowned for their rich honey-sweet flavor.

- Selection: pick a smooth, blemish-free squash that is heavy for its size and evenly colored. Avoid a squash that has a pale green tint as it is under-ripe.
- Best uses: baking with butter and cinnamon.



Spiced Winter Squash Bread

Squash is so moist and flavorful that bread like this doesn't need much fat to taste rich.

This is perfect right out of the oven, or sliced and toasted the next day.

Ingredients

- 1½ cups whole wheat pastry flour
- 1 cup unbleached flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon, optional
- ½ teaspoon allspice
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 cup butternut, squash, pureed* (prepared in advance)
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 large eggs
- ½ cup fat-free yogurt
- ¼ cup vegetable oil

Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Grease a loaf pan. In a large bowl, stir together flours, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, allspice and nutmeg.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk the squash puree, brown sugar, eggs, yogurt and oil until smooth. Pour the squash mixture into the dry mixture and stir just until combines.
3. Scrape the batter into the loaf pan. Bake loaf for 50-60 minutes, until a toothpick inserted in the center of the loaf comes out with no batter on it. Cool on rack for at least 10 minutes before slicing. When completely cool, wrap tightly and store in the refrigerator for up to a week.

Squash Puree

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Halve the squash, scoop out seeds, and place it cut side down on an oiled sheet pan.
3. Roast at 400° until tender when pierced with a paring knife.
4. With a metal spoon, scrape out the cooked flesh and puree in a blender or food processor or mash with a potato masher until smooth.