

WHAT'S FRESH

Pumpkin & Acorn Squash

Pumpkins and acorn squash are winter squashes and in season in Georgia from August to December. They are a starchy vegetable that has less carbs and sugar than sweet potatoes and can be prepared with sweet or savory seasonings.

Quick Tips:

- Choose pumpkins that are solid and heavy for its size.
- Whole pumpkins can be stored in a cool, dry and dark place for up to 3 months.
- Smaller pumpkins are sweeter and have less stringy flesh
- If the pumpkin is small, notice the thickness of the skin and flesh after scooping out the seeds. If it is thin, cook for less time because it can easily dry out.

How to prep pumpkin and acorn squash:

Rinse the squash and pat dry. Cut off the stem if it's long. Use this guide to prepare any winter squash with a lumpy or textured skin that is hard to peel, like acorn squash.



1. Cut in half

Cut off the stem end. From the top, push the tip of the knife straight down in the center of the squash. Hold the squash firmly slice through the side of the squash. Rotate & repeat on the other side.



2. Scoop strings and seeds

Use a spoon to scoop out the strings and seeds, scraping the sides. Do not scoop too deeply into the flesh.



3. Cut in quarters

For larger squash, cut each half in half again to make quarters.



4. Rotate & Cut wedges

Cut each quarter or half into 1-2" wedges.



5. Scoop out flesh

After cooking, use a spoon to scoop out the flesh, scraping the rind until it is clean. If this is hard, it's not cooked enough.



6. Peel off skin

(Wedges or Quarters)
After cooking, peel up the corner of the skin and use a butter knife to separate the skin from the flesh.

Ways to eat pumpkin:

Make pumpkin puree: Steam, boil or roast pumpkin. It is done when easily pierced with a fork.

1. To Steam or boil: Add several inches of water to a pot with a steamer basket or use a metal colander that will fit inside the pot. To boil, do not use a basket and add more water. When water is boiling, add pumpkin wedges or chunks and cook with a vented lid for 30 minutes until tender. Add more hot water as needed. Drain the water and remove the skin.

2. To Roast: On a baking sheet, place halves cut side down or quarters and wedges cut side up. Bake at 375°F for 45-60 minutes or until tender. When cool enough to touch, scoop out the flesh of the halves or peel off the skin of the pieces. Place cooked flesh in a blender or food processor and puree, adding a little water as needed. It should be less wet than applesauce.

Use puree to make a creamy soup or pasta sauce. Add to chili or stews to thicken it up, or substitute for oil in baked goods. Of course, make pie occasionally!

Save pumpkin puree for later by freezing in 1 cup portions for ease when you need it in the future.



Roasted Pumpkin Wedges

SERVES
4

Ingredients

Sugar Pumpkin - 1, small
Garlic Powder - 1 teaspoon
Onion Powder - 1 teaspoon
Chili Powder - 1 teaspoon
Cayenne Pepper - 1/2 teaspoon [optional]

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 400° F.
2. Cut pumpkin in half from top to bottom. Scoop out the seeds and strings.
3. Cut halves into 1-2 inch wedges.
4. Drizzle wedges with oil and sprinkle with seasoning. Rub onto the flesh.
5. Bake for 15-25 minutes, depending on the thickness of the squash. Check first at 15 minutes. Wedges are done when easily pierced with a fork.

The skin is too tough to eat, but you can serve wedges with or without the skin. Easily separate the flesh from the skin with a spoon or butter knife, or scrape it off with your teeth while eating.

For sweet roasted wedges, season with 1 Tablespoon brown sugar and 1 teaspoon of ground cinnamon, adding 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg and 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger (nutmeg and ginger optional).

Try other savory seasoning combinations, like:

Lemon Pepper Chili/Curry Powder + Cumin Turmeric + Coriander



Roasted Pumpkin Seeds

SERVES
4

Ingredients

Pumpkin Seeds - from 1-2 pumpkins [will vary]
Oil - 1/2 teaspoon per cup of seeds
Salt - 1/2 teaspoon per 1 1/2 cup of seeds
Seasonings of your choice

DIRECTIONS:

1. Place pumpkin seeds and strings in a colander in the sink.
2. Run water over the mixture and separate the strings from the seeds with your hands.
3. Spread seeds on a towel lined baking sheet or newspaper to dry overnight.
4. Next day, preheat an oven to 325°F and spray the pan with non-stick spray.
5. Pick out any remaining strings on the seeds.
6. Add the dry seeds, oil and seasonings in a bowl and mix well to coat the seeds.
7. Spread seeds in a single layer on a pan and bake for 20-30 minutes until golden brown. Stir them halfway through the bake.

It is very important for seeds to dry overnight or they will not become crispy.

Laying newspaper or clean dry dish towels on your counter to dry the seeds overnight makes for an easy clean-up.

Eat roasted seeds alone or with a fruit for a healthy snack or add to a salad for extra crunch.

Use a pizza pan, casserole dish, cake pan or baking sheet, as long as the seeds are in a single layer the type of pan doesn't matter. It is better to cook in batches than to crowd the pan.