



Connecting New Jersey Farms to Local Schools

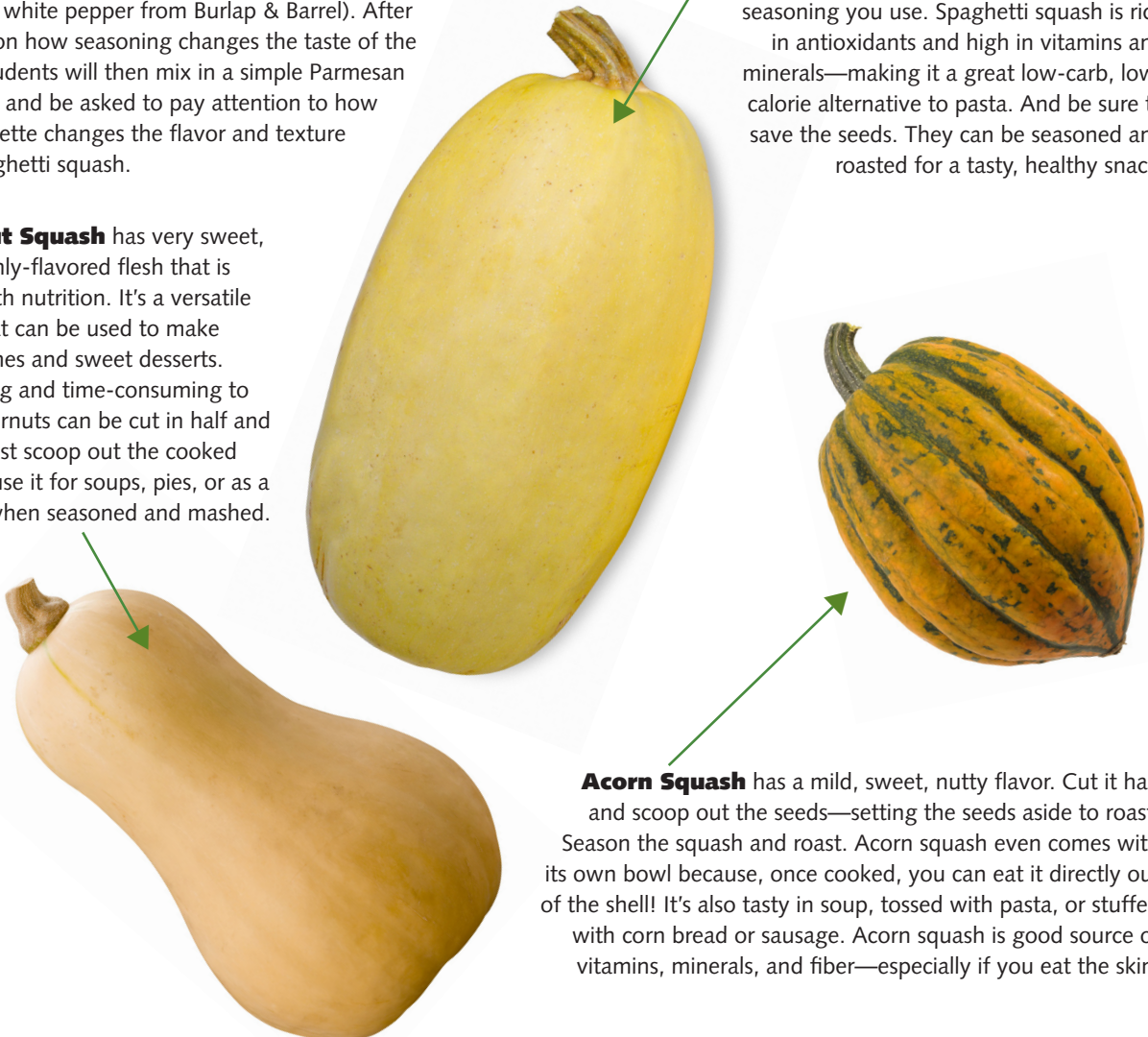
Winter Squash is the featured item in our Garden State on Your Plate tastings!

Our Winter Squash Tasting begins with a small tasting of unseasoned roasted spaghetti squash. The students then season the squash with a pinch of salt that is infused with white pepper (we chose fermented white pepper from Burlap & Barrel). After reflecting on how seasoning changes the taste of the squash, students will then mix in a simple Parmesan vinaigrette and be asked to pay attention to how the vinaigrette changes the flavor and texture of the spaghetti squash.

Butternut Squash has very sweet, tender, richly-flavored flesh that is packed with nutrition. It's a versatile squash that can be used to make savory dishes and sweet desserts. Challenging and time-consuming to peel, butternuts can be cut in half and roasted. Just scoop out the cooked flesh and use it for soups, pies, or as a side dish when seasoned and mashed.

Spaghetti Squash flesh can be separated into tender, golden, spaghetti-like strands when cooked. A very mild squash, it takes on the flavor of whatever sauce or seasoning you use. Spaghetti squash is rich in antioxidants and high in vitamins and minerals—making it a great low-carb, low-calorie alternative to pasta. And be sure to save the seeds. They can be seasoned and roasted for a tasty, healthy snack.

Acorn Squash has a mild, sweet, nutty flavor. Cut it half and scoop out the seeds—setting the seeds aside to roast. Season the squash and roast. Acorn squash even comes with its own bowl because, once cooked, you can eat it directly out of the shell! It's also tasty in soup, tossed with pasta, or stuffed with corn bread or sausage. Acorn squash is good source of vitamins, minerals, and fiber—especially if you eat the skin.

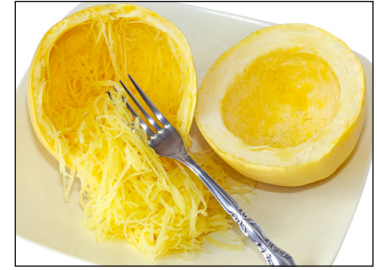


See Garden State on Your Plate photos on Facebook and Instagram

Cooking Spaghetti Squash

by Chris Albrecht, Executive Chef, Ryland Inn • Serves 2 to 4

This recipe is a starting point for exploring the versatility of spaghetti squash. There are many options that you can try for the sauce. My favorite is brown butter and sun-dried tomatoes. This squash has a nutty taste and spaghetti-like texture, so it is well positioned to be as good with a cheese sauce as it is with poached flounder. It is possible to overcook spaghetti squash. The nutty flavor will remain, but the texture will be more like a sweet potato.



1 spaghetti squash, 2 to 3 pounds 1TB olive oil or melted butter Herbs for seasoning Sea salt and white pepper

Preheat oven to 375°F. Cut squash in half lengthwise. Scoop out seeds (set them aside to roast as a tasty, nutritious snack). Lay the squash halves on a baking sheet, cut side up. Season with herbs, such as thyme, sage, or rosemary, and salt and pepper. Drizzle with olive oil or butter and cover with foil.

Bake until the center is soft, about 45 minutes. Remove from oven. When cool enough to handle, scoop out the inside using a fork, going with the grain of the squash to create the spaghetti strands.

Dress with your sauce or topping of choice. Or set aside for later use. Just be sure to reheat with moisture to maintain the texture.

Ingredients that Go Well with Spaghetti Squash

bacon • basil • bay leaf • black pepper • brown butter • brown sugar
chicken • chives • cinnamon • duck • fennel • feta • garlic • ginger
hazelnuts • lentils • mushrooms • nutmeg • onion • oregano • Parmesan
parsley • pesto • pistachios • red bell pepper • rosemary • sage • scallops
soy sauce • thyme • tomatillos • tomato sauce • vinegar • walnuts

Words that Describe the Flavor, Color & Texture of Winter Squash

bright yellow • buttery • chewy • creamy
dark green • earthy • fibrous • fragile
gray-blue • green stripes • mellow • mild
moist • nutty • orange • rich • smooth
starchy • stringy • subtly sweet • tender

GARDEN STATE ON YOUR PLATE WINTER SQUASH FACTS

The cooked flesh of spaghetti squash separates into fibrous strands that can be used just like pasta. Spaghetti squash has a very mild flavor.

Squash is an important vegetable crop in New Jersey and butternut squash is our most widely grown winter squash. Most squash grown in our state is eaten fresh, although a small amount is used to make baby food.

Hubbard is a very large heirloom squash that was first brought to the United States in the early 1800s. Seeds from the green hubbard were given to James Howard Gregory, who bred them to improve the texture and flavor. In 1909, Gregory made seeds for his blue hubbard available to farmers and now blue hubbard is the most popular type of hubbard squash.

Pumpkins are members of the cucurbit family, and are related to bitter melon, cucumbers, squash, and watermelon.

Acorn squash has thin skin, making it one of the few types of winter squash with edible skin. If you want to remove the skin, cook the squash first and then peel off the skin or scoop out the flesh.

Archaeological evidence shows that squash was first cultivated in Mexico between 8,000 and 10,000 years ago.

Although cooks and chefs think of squash as a vegetable, botanists tell us they are a fruit! That's because, like all fruit, they contain seeds and grow from the flowering part of the plant.

Hubbard squash has very tough skin—making it difficult for animals to bite into them in the garden. That also means it is very hard to cut them in the kitchen! The Food Network suggests putting a towel on the ground, raising a hubbard over your head, and dropping it on the towel to crack it open.

The Long Island Cheese Pumpkin has sweet, creamy, string-less flesh, which makes them perfect for pies and soups. They got that name because they look like a wheel of cheese.

Acorn squash is native to the Americas—likely originating in Mexico and Central America. Named for its acorn-like shape, it is one of the more productive winter squashes.



Garden State on Your Plate is a series of four school-wide produce tasting in each of the Princeton elementary schools. The emphasis is on a New Jersey produce item, the different ways it can be prepared, and how the flavor can be altered by the chef and the students. Children learn about farming and cooking, and gain flavor power—the ability to personalize their item using salt and citrus. In support of the tastings, children will learn about each farm item through a variety of classroom- and garden-based lessons.



Founded in 2006, Princeton School Gardens Cooperative fosters garden- and food-based education in the classroom, cafeteria and community • PSGCOOP.ORG