

Seasonal Eating
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Acorn Squash—A Perfect Fall Side
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The horse show is over and the winner crowned. The children are back in school. The white pants are packed away until spring. Yes, it's the beginning of fall and that means fall flavors on the table. Nothing says fall better than acorn squash. Just the name conjures up visions of colorful leaves and scampering squirrels.

Acorn squash get their name from their shape, which resembles an acorn. The outside comes in colors of dark green, yellow or orange with a light yellow/orange flesh inside. They are a winter squash which means they have a hard non-edible shell on the outside with seeds and pulp on the inside like a pumpkin. Cut them open and scoop out the seeds and pulp. Now you can steam or roast them in the shell. I prefer roasting the halves at 400 degrees for about an hour or until tender. You can also cut the squash into half rings or wedges for quicker roasting.



Acorn squash have very little flavor on their own so they take on whatever flavor you put with them. This can be sweet or savory. The squash are often cooked with a glaze of some type or a little butter and brown sugar in the cavity. You can also stuff them with mincemeat and sautéed apples topped with nuts. On the savory side, try stuffing them with a sausage stuffing for a main dish or a meatless stuffing for a side. You can also make soup by cooking and then pureeing the flesh with spices and sautéed onion, thinned with cream or chicken broth.

The other day, I roasted half rings of the squash with a sweet cinnamon glaze and topped them with cranberries and pecans. Done this way, they make a great side dish for a roasted pork loin or grilled chicken. Make sure you cut the squash in half lengthwise and then into slices so you get the beautiful scalloped edges. The flesh will pull away from the hard shell with your fork.

So get into the fall swing with a winter squash for dinner. Visit the Bedford County Extension website for more recipes and information about seasonal eating (bedford.tennessee.edu).

Cinnamon Glazed Acorn Squash

2 tablespoons butter, melted
1 tablespoon brown sugar
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 acorn squash
1/4 cup dried cranberries, chopped
1/4 cup toasted pecans, chopped

In a large bowl combine the butter, brown sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg. Wash the outside of the squash and cut in half lengthwise. Scoop out the seeds and pulp. Slice the halves into 3/4" thick half rounds. Toss in the bowl with the glaze mixture until well coated and lay in a single layer on a foil lined baking sheet. Bake at 400 degrees for 20-30 minutes or until tender to a fork. Toss the cranberries and nuts with any remaining glaze in the bowl. Place squash on a serving platter and sprinkle with cranberry and nut mixture.