

# Winter Squash

**1. What are some nutritional benefits of winter squash? How do the nutrients vary between different color varieties?**

*Answers will vary.*

- The nutritional and health benefits may include:
  - healthy vision (Vitamin A),
  - healthy immune system (Vitamin C),
  - healthy skin,
  - heart health and antioxidant properties (Vitamin E),
  - intestinal tract health (fiber); and
  - maintenance of body metabolism and basic muscular system (potassium).
- Darker yellow/orange flesh varieties (acorn, butternut, pumpkin) contain more Vitamin A (more than 300%).
- Darker green shell varieties (kabocha) contain more Vitamin C and less Vitamin A.
- Spaghetti squash, a lighter colored flesh, contains very little nutrients (no good or excellent sources).

**2. Search for recipes with winter squash. List the various ways squash can be prepared.**

*Answers will vary.*

Baked, boiled, sautéed, steamed, pureed (for soup), chopped and cooked in soup, strained, stuffed, grilled, roasted, and used in pies and cakes.

**3. Go to the grocery store and identify all of the different varieties of winter squash. Do a price cost comparison. What are the most and least expensive varieties?**

*Answers will vary by store and region.*

Varieties include: Acorn, Banana, Buttercup, Butternut, Calabaza, Delicata,

Kabocha/Japanese, Mediterranean, Pumpkin, Spaghetti.

**4. What are the top three squash-producing countries in the world? Hypothesize why these countries lead squash crop production.**

- 1) China (30% of world output)
- 2) India (19%)
- 3) Ukraine (5%)
- 4) Egypt (4%)
- 5) United States (3%)

*Hypotheses will vary. Possible answers may include:*

- Winter squash is an important food staple (long winters) to country's population.
- There is a large area for growing crop.
- There is high bee infestation (ideal for growing squash).
- Climate is subtropical to tropical (ideal for growing squash).

Sources:

[www.ers.usda.gov](http://www.ers.usda.gov)  
[www.nutritiondata.com](http://www.nutritiondata.com)  
[www.en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org)

Updated: November 2009