

PRESERVING PUMPKIN & WINTER SQUASH

Factsheet | HGIC 3281 | **Updated:** Mar 5, 2010

Cooking

The easiest way to prepare the pulp of pumpkin or hard winter squash is to bake it in the oven. Wash the pumpkin or squash and cut in half crosswise. Remove its seeds and strings. Place the halves in a pan, shell side up. Bake in a 325 °F oven for one hour or more until the flesh becomes tender and begins to fall apart. Scrape the pumpkin or squash from the shell and put through a blender or food processor to form a smooth consistency. The pulp may be frozen for use later, but the pureed pulp cannot be safely canned. For canning, use only cubed pumpkin or winter squash.



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Canning Cubed Pumpkin & Winter Squash

Pumpkin and winter squash should have a hard rind and stringless, mature pulp of ideal quality for cooking fresh. Small pumpkins (sugar or pie varieties) make better products. Winter squash varieties include acorn, banana, buttercup, butternut, golden delicious and Hubbard. **CAUTION**—Spaghetti squash will not stay cubed when cooked and must be frozen instead of canned.

Wash, remove seeds, cut into 1-inch slices and peel. Cut flesh into 1-inch cubes. Add to a saucepot of boiling water, and boil two minutes. **CAUTION—Do not mash or puree.**

Pack hot cubes into hot jars, leaving 1-inch headspace. Fill jar to 1 inch from top with boiling hot cooking liquid. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rims. Adjust lids.

Process in a dial-gauge pressure canner at 11 pounds pressure (12 pounds pressure between 2,001–4,000 feet) OR in a weighted-gauge pressure canner at 10 pounds pressure (15 pounds if above 1,000 ft. altitude). Process pints for 55 minutes and quarts for 90 minutes.

To make pies using canned pumpkin, drain liquid from jars and strain or sieve cubes.

Freezing

Select full-colored mature pumpkin and squash with fine texture and a hard rind. Wash and prepare as instructed above to cook in the oven. Or, wash, remove seeds, and cut into cooking-size sections. Then cook until soft in boiling water, in steam or in a pressure cooker. Remove pulp from rind and mash. (For spaghetti squash, mashing the cooked pulp is not necessary.) To cool, place pan with pumpkin or squash in cold water and stir occasionally. Package in freezer bags or freezer containers leaving ½-inch headspace. Seal and freeze.



Cooking pumpkins can be cooked and frozen or pressure canned for later use.
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Drying & Roasting Seeds

Drying seeds and roasting seeds are two different processes. To dry, carefully wash pumpkin or squash seeds to remove the clinging fibrous tissue. Seeds can be dried in the sun, in a dehydrator at 115–120 °F for 1 to 2 hours, or in an oven on warm for 3 to 4 hours. Stir frequently to avoid scorching.

To roast, take dried seeds, toss with oil and/or salt and roast in a preheated oven at 250 °F for 10 to 15 minutes.

Source:

Reynolds, Susan and Paulette Williams. *So Easy To Preserve*. University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service. Revised by Elizabeth Andress and Judy Harrison, 2006.

If this document didn't answer your questions, please contact HGIC at hgic@clemson.edu or 1-888-656-9988.

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