



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

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VEGETABLE FEATURE: WINTER SQUASH

By: Chef Andrea Yoder

Description: We grow a wide variety of winter squash which we start distributing in late September. We strive to grow a variety of types that are aesthetically pleasing while still being interesting, delicious, sweet and flavorful! So before we get too deep into winter squash deliveries, we wanted to pause a moment to review a few of the basics.

Storage: First, let's talk about storage. The optimal storage temperature for winter squash is 45-55°F. This may be difficult to achieve in a home setting, so my recommendation is to choose a cool, dry place in your home if possible, even if it is a little warmer than 55°F. Many people choose to store winter squash in the garage or basement, which is fine to do as long as these spaces don't get too cold in the winter and if they aren't too humid. In the coldest part of the winter our garage temperature usually dips into the 30's which is too cold for squash. We also do not recommend storing winter squash in the refrigerator. As I mentioned, storage at temperatures less than 45°F may cause chill injury which will shorten the storage potential of your squash. Honestly, it's fine to also store them at room temperature, beautifully displayed in your kitchen or living space. They will add beauty to your space until you're ready to eat them!

While winter squash is a vegetable meant to be stored and eaten over time, not all winter squash varieties have the same storage-ability. Some varieties that have a thin skin and/or are high in natural sugars typically have a shorter shelf life and may not keep into the deep winter. Other varieties that have a thicker skin are often able to be stored for quite some time. The other factor that affects how well a squash may store is related to the field conditions where it was grown. If we have a wet year or there is some plant disease in the field, we find some squash varieties do not store very well.

So, keep an eye on your squash and check them periodically if you're keeping them for an extended time. Look for any spots starting to form that may indicate the start of deterioration. If you do see a problem spot, don't automatically throw it out! **I repeat, do not throw it out!** If you catch it early, the problem may only affect a very small portion that may be cut away. If that's the case, don't delay, it's time to cook the squash before the issue gets bigger!

Preparation & Use: Each week we encourage you to check the "What's In the Box" section of your email where I'll include details about the squash variety we're delivering. Some varieties, such as butternut, are multi-purpose and may be used in a variety of ways including roasted, baked, simmered, steamed or put into soups and sauces. Other squash may have a more specific use. I'll also make an indication as to whether or not a variety may have a longer storage potential or if you should use it sooner than later.

What's In The Box?

SPINACH: This is the first of our fall spinach. Enjoy an **Apple Walnut Spinach Salad With Balsamic Vinaigrette**. If you prefer to cook it, consider making a **Spinach and Red Pepper Frittata**.

SALAD MIX: Running short on time? This bag of salad mix is nature's fast food gift to you this week. Just toss it with some oil and vinegar or your favorite pre-made vinaigrette. Add some cooked chicken, hardboiled eggs, nuts or seeds for protein and any other raw vegetables or fruit you may have available. You'll have a dinner salad in less than 10 minutes!

ITALIAN GARLIC: A little bit of garlic makes everything taste better! Try this simple recipe for **Turnips Sautéed with Garlic and Onion**.

GREEN BOSTON LETTUCE: This variety of lettuce is known for its tender leaves that can be used as a base ingredient for a salad or take advantage of the cupped leaves to make lettuce wraps. Check out this week's **Cooking With the Box** article for a few recipe suggestions.

RED ONIONS: Described as being "vibrant red" by the seed company, we find this to be an attractive onion with good storage potential. Slice them thinly and add to salads and sandwiches.

SWEET PEPPERS: This week's selections may include Orange Ukraine, Red Bell Peppers, Orange or Red Italian Frying Peppers. Any pepper packed loose in the box is a sweet pepper.

RED OR GOLDEN GRAPE TOMATOES AND VARIETY OF TOMATOES: Our tomato production is starting to taper off, but we're still picking! The end of tomato season will be coming soon so enjoy these final few weeks. If your tomatoes are a bit on the green side, ripen them at room temperature. If you start to see a spot forming, it's time to eat it!

WHITE, PURPLE OR YELLOW CAULIFLOWER OR BROCCOLI ROMANESCO OR BROCCOLI: Cauliflower production is starting to slow down, but we are now picking from two fields of fall broccoli. Please note, we are seeing some small black spots forming on some of the heads of broccoli. The spot appears to be fairly isolated to the area it's forming in. Given there is still a lot of usable, good broccoli remaining on the crown and the stem, we chose to harvest them. If you see this, just trim that part away with a paring knife and utilize the remainder.

GOLD CAROLA POTATOES: This is one of our longstanding potato varieties that is gold on the outside and inside! It's very similar to what you may call a "Yukon Gold" potato. It's classified as a waxy potato and is good for baking, frying, boiling and roasting.

BUTTERNUT SQUASH: This is probably the most well-known and most versatile types of winter squash! We are working with two varieties this week. If you receive several small butternut in your box, you most likely have Butterscotch, a variety characterized by its sweet, delicious flavor and small size. If you received a larger butternut, it's likely a variety called Tiana. This one is described as having sweet, smooth, creamy flesh.

GUAJILLO CHILI PEPPERS: This week's guajillo peppers are packaged in a clear plastic bag along with 2 jalapeño peppers. All of the peppers in this little bag are hot!

JALAPEÑO PEPPERS: There are two green jalapeño peppers packaged in a clear plastic bag along with red guajillo peppers. Don't confuse these hot peppers with the sweet peppers which are packed loose in your box.

VIOLET QUEEN SALAD TURNIPS: This is a unique salad turnip variety intended for fresh eating. The green tops are also edible and are delicious when simply sautéed in butter along with the turnips! You can use these turnips in any recipe that calls for salad turnips, baby white turnips or hakurei turnips.

Don't feel like you have to eat all your winter squash right away. If it's a variety that will store, you can set it aside for later. If you do have some that are starting to develop spots, you should still cook it even if you are not ready to eat or use them. You can scoop out the flesh once it's cooked, puree it and pop it in the freezer. Better to do this so you can preserve the flesh than to surrender it to the compost bin!

There are so many different ways you can use winter squash. You can include it in soups, stews, sauces, casseroles, hot dishes, pasta dishes, baked goods, desserts, or just eat it with a little butter, salt and pepper. Don't be afraid to create tasty pizzas, tacos, quesadillas, curry dishes and anything else you might dream up! Winter is long and we're going to be eating quite a lot of squash over the next months, so pull out your old favorite recipes and start looking for new ones to keep things interesting!

Roasted Squash and Black Bean Enchiladas

Yield: 4 servings

<u>Enchilada Sauce:</u>	½ tsp kosher salt	½ tsp kosher salt	4 ounces salad greens (baby spinach, salad mix or arugula) or shredded lettuce
2 Tbsp vegetable oil	¼ tsp cayenne pepper	1 (15-ounce) can black beans, drained and rinsed	½ medium red onion, thinly sliced
½ medium red onion, diced	¼ tsp freshly ground pepper	1 cup corn kernels (fresh or frozen)	¼ cup fresh cilantro leaves
2 Tbsp all-purpose flour	2 cups vegetable or chicken broth	10 (8-inch) flour tortillas	Juice of 1 lime
¼ cup chili powder	<u>For the Enchiladas:</u>	1 pound butternut squash, cut into ½-inch cubes	
1 Tbsp tomato paste	1 Tbsp olive oil	2 ½ cups (12 oz) shredded Monterey Jack or mild cheddar cheese, divided	
1 ½ tsp garlic powder			
1 Tsp ground cumin			
1 tsp dried oregano			

Make the sauce:

1. Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft and fragrant, about 5 minutes. Add the flour, stir to coat the onions, and cook for 2 minutes to lightly toast the flour.
2. Stir in the chili powder, tomato paste, garlic powder, cumin, oregano, salt, cayenne, and black pepper. Cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Gradually whisk in the broth. Bring the sauce to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer until thickened, 6 to 8 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat.

Make the enchiladas:

3. Arrange a rack in the middle of the oven and heat to 425°F.
4. Toss the squash with the olive oil and salt, and arrange in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet. Roast until tender and caramelized, 20 to 25 minutes, stirring once halfway through. Cool slightly. Reduce the oven temperature to 350°F.
5. Place the roasted squash, black beans, and corn in a large bowl, and stir to combine. Spread ½ cup of the sauce in an even layer over the bottom of a 9 x 13-inch baking dish.
6. To assemble the enchiladas, place the tortillas on a flat work surface. Spread about 2 Tbsp of sauce over the top of each tortilla, then top with ½ cup of the vegetable mixture and about 2 Tbsp of cheese. Roll tightly to close, and place seam-side down in the baking dish. Repeat with the remaining tortillas. Spread the remaining sauce over the top of the enchiladas, then sprinkle with the remaining cheese.
7. Bake, uncovered, for 20 minutes. Meanwhile, place the greens, sliced red onion, cilantro, and lime juice in a medium bowl and toss to combine.
8. Divide the enchiladas between plates, top with greens, and serve.

Note from Chef Andrea: This recipe was recommended to me by some of our longtime Twin Cities CSA Members. They sourced the recipe from www.thekitchn.com and it's become one of my fall and winter favorites too!

Winter Squash and Mushroom Curry

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

3 Tbsp vegetable oil	1 jalapeño (may substitute guajillo or Korean peppers)	2 cloves garlic, minced	1 pound mushrooms, a mix of cultivated and wild, trimmed and sliced ¼-inch thick
10 oz butternut or other winter squash, peeled and cut into ½-inch pieces	1 small onion, finely diced	1 tsp ground coriander	¼ cup coconut milk
Kosher salt and black pepper, to taste	½ tsp black mustard seeds	Pinch of ground cayenne	2 Tbsp lime juice
	½ tsp cumin seeds	½ tsp ground turmeric	Cilantro sprigs, for garnish
	Fresh or frozen curry leaves (optional)		

1. In a wide skillet, heat oil over medium-high. When hot, add squash cubes in one layer. Season with salt and pepper. Cook for about 2 minutes, letting cubes brown slightly, then flip and cook for 2 minutes more. Use a slotted spoon to lift the squash out, then set aside.
2. Cut a lengthwise slit in the jalapeño to open it, but leave whole (This helps heat the sauce without making it too spicy.) If you prefer a more mild curry, just use an appropriately smaller portion of jalapeños (or other hot pepper of your choosing).
3. Add onions, salt lightly and cook, stirring, 1 minute. Add mustard seeds, cumin seeds and curry leaves, if using, and let sizzle for 30 seconds, then add garlic, coriander, cayenne, turmeric and the hot pepper. Stir well and cook for 30 seconds more.
4. Add mushrooms, season with salt and toss to coat. Cook, stirring, until mushrooms begin to soften, about 5 minutes.
5. Return squash cubes to skillet, stir in coconut milk and bring to a simmer. Lower heat to medium and simmer for another 5 minutes. If the mixture looks dry, thin with a little water. Taste and season with salt.
6. Before serving, stir in lime juice. Transfer to a warm serving dish and garnish with cilantro.

This recipe was developed by David Tanis and is featured at www.cooking.NYTimes.com. One of our longtime CSA members in the Twin Cities recommended this recipe and it's a tasty one!