

Getting to Know Winter Squash

Winter squash range in flavor from bitter to super-sweet, and their texture can be fibrous or creamy. The big problem is that looking at the thick skin doesn't tell you much about what's underneath. That's why we held a taste fest of 12 varieties. While some varieties are worth seeking out at farmstands, others are best used as porch decorations.



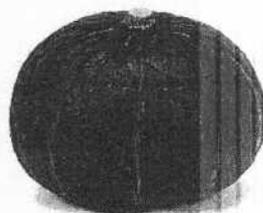
Blue Hubbard
BIG AND TASTY

Though daunting in size (it can run upward of 15 pounds), the blue hubbard was a big hit with our tasters, who liked the "intense squash flavor" and "creamy" texture of the pale orange flesh. Look for smaller pieces wrapped in plastic at the supermarket.



Red Turban
SUPERFICIAL BEAUTY

Striking in appearance but "vegetal" in flavor, this squash is best used for decorative purposes. Our tasters found its flavor "bitter" and akin to "canned asparagus."



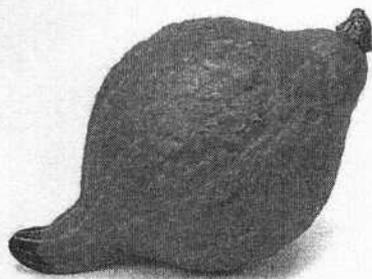
Buttercup
SWEET AND CREAMY

Dark green on the outside and deep orange inside, this sweet squash was deemed "creamy" and "milder than butternut." While the texture can be a bit dry, buttercup was a favorite with tasters.



Sweet Dumpling
SWEET AS CUSTARD

This small squash with pale yellow flesh was universally liked. Tasters praised its "sweet" and "nutty flavor" and its "creamy," "custardy" texture. To make the most of its small size, we like to serve it halved with the skin on.



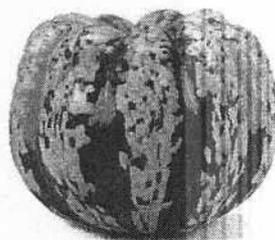
Golden Hubbard
BLUE IS BETTER

Not as common as its blue cousin, the golden hubbard was described as "more assertive" and "not as sweet." Some found it "slightly bitter" and "a bit dry."



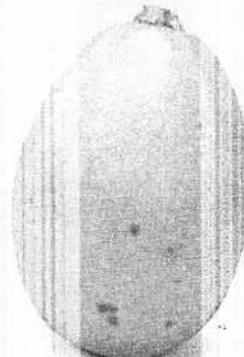
Butternut
OLD RELIABLE

Butternut is prized for its "mildly sweet," nutty flavor and "lovely smooth texture." It can be "a little fibrous" but generally lives up to its name as "very buttery." The thin skin can be easily removed with a sharp vegetable peeler.



Carnival
SWEET BUT STRINGY

This festive squash was praised for its "very fresh," "sweet" flavor, though many tasters found it "too watery," "stringy," and "not very exciting."



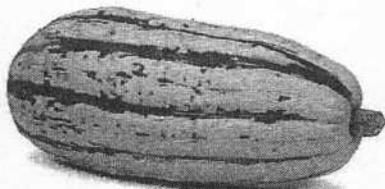
Spaghetti
BLAND AND BORING

When cooked, the flesh of this squash forms translucent strands that resemble spaghetti. "Mild" and "vegetal," spaghetti squash is usually sauced; it tends to be "bland on its own."



Acorn
IDEAL FOR STUFFING

This popular squash was praised by tasters as "very sweet" and "nutty," though many found it "a little watery" and "starchy, like a russet potato." Its small size makes it a perfect candidate for stuffing.



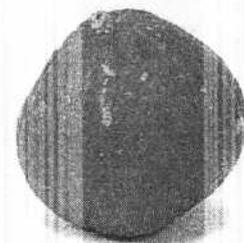
Delicata
BEAUTIFULLY SWEET

Tasters liked the "nutty" flavor of this "sweet," "creamy" squash, which also goes by the name sweet potato or bohemian squash. The thin skin is edible, if a bit tough. Definitely worth seeking out.



Kabocha
DRY AND STARCHY

Though it resembles a pumpkin in shape (but not color) and is just as sweet, the kabocha has "dense flesh" and a "mealy," "starchy" texture that makes it more like a sweet potato. Interesting, but not a favorite.



Golden Nugget
TOO BLAND

Sweet and slightly bland, golden nuggets resemble pumpkins inside and out. With an extra-thick skin and small amount of flesh, this squash requires a lot of work for a low yield. There are better choices.