

KIDS CLUB

NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the latest ChopChop Kids Club newsletter! (If you missed the last one, it's [here](#).) This month we're cooking with squash! Plus doing a lot more with it—like jack-o'-lantern-themed math games, rotten science experiments, and more. We're also wondering what your favorite things are about this month.

Please drop us a line and let us know!

Have fun and be well.



Simplest Roasted Squash

This recipe calls for acorn squash, but you can cook other winter squash the same way. You may need to deal with their shape a little differently during the cutting process; as long as you end up with thinnish wedges or slices, they'll come out right. Very tender squash such as butternut and delicata won't need the added water.

■ HANDS-ON TIME: 20 MINUTES ■ TOTAL TIME: 1 HOUR ■ MAKES: 4 SERVINGS

KITCHEN GEAR

Cutting board
Sharp knife (adult needed)
Measuring spoons
Measuring cup
9 x 13-inch baking pan

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 2 acorn squash
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup water

INSTRUCTIONS

Wash your hands with soap and water, then gather all your equipment and ingredients and put them on the counter.

1. Turn the oven on and set the heat to 425 degrees (see next page). Use 1 teaspoon of the oil to grease the pan.
2. Put the squash on the cutting board and stand them up (if possible). Tug or cut off the stems. Ask an adult to very carefully cut each squash in half through the stem end.
3. Using a measuring spoon, scrape out the seeds and as many of the fibrous strands as possible from each squash. (See "Roasted Squash Seeds" on page 4.) Cut each half into 4 wedges.
4. Put the squash wedges in the pan, cut-side down, drizzle with the remaining 2 tablespoons oil, and sprinkle with the salt. Pour the water into the bottom of the pan so that it surrounds the squash (the water will evaporate as the squash bakes).
5. Once the oven temperature has reached 425 degrees, put the pan in the oven and roast until the flesh of the squash is deeply browned and you can easily poke the tip of a sharp knife into it, 35 to 45 minutes.
6. Serve right away.

GET CREATIVE

Halfway through cooking, sprinkle on 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme or rosemary leaves (or a large pinch of dried) and/or drizzle with 1 tablespoon honey or maple syrup.





Pumpkin Loaf with Raisins and Dried Cherries



Any-Vegetable Minestrone

DO YOU HAVE MORE SQUASH OR SOME CANNED PUMPKIN?

Try one of these recipes.

Butternut Squash and Apple Soup: www.chopchopfamily.org/recipe/butternut-squash-and-apple-soup/

Any-Vegetable Minestrone: www.chopchopfamily.org/recipe/any-vegetable-minestrone/

Indian Vegetable Curry: www.chopchopfamily.org/recipe/indian-vegetable-curry/

Pumpkin-Pie Smoothie: www.chopchopfamily.org/recipe/pumpkin-pie-smoothie/

Pumpkin Loaf with Raisins and Dried Cherries: www.chopchopfamily.org/recipe/pumpkin-loaf-with-raisins-and-dried-cherries/

KITCHEN SKILL

How to Use the Oven Safely

While you're still learning, an adult should help make sure that the oven has been turned on correctly and everything is safe. Remember to tie your hair back, keep hands and any flammable objects—like dish towels, papers, or cardboard packages—away from the oven, use the proper cooking temperature, and carefully watch the food that is cooking.

1. Make sure there is nothing in the oven before you turn it on. Turn the oven on and set it to 425 degrees. Wait for the oven to preheat. Many ovens will beep to alert you when the oven is preheated.
2. With the help of an adult, open the oven door, put the baking pan in the oven, and close the door.
3. Set a timer according to the recipe—35 minutes—and check to see if the squash is done. If not, leave it in for another 5 or 10 minutes and check again.
4. Avoid opening the oven door to peek at the squash, as it will make the oven lose heat.
5. Use pot holders when removing the pan from the oven.
6. Be sure to turn off the oven when you're done using it!



Roasted Squash Seeds

You can roast the seeds from any winter squash, not just your jack-o'-lantern! Your squash may have more or fewer seeds than 1 cup. You can just adjust the ingredient amounts accordingly.

■ HANDS-ON TIME: 15 MINUTES ■ TOTAL TIME: 30–55 MINUTES ■ MAKES: 4 SERVINGS

KITCHEN GEAR

Colander or strainer
Clean dish towel
Measuring cup
Measuring spoons
Rimmed baking sheet
Wooden spoon or silicone spatula
Potholders

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (or so) pumpkin or squash seeds
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- ½ teaspoon salt

INSTRUCTIONS

Wash your hands with soap and water, then gather all your equipment and ingredients and put them on the counter.

1. Turn the oven on and set the heat to 325 degrees (see previous page).
2. Put the seeds in the colander or strainer and rinse well, but don't worry if there's still squash attached to them! (This is edible.) Blot them dry with the dish towel.
3. Put the seeds on the baking sheet and add the oil and salt. Mix everything together, then spread out the seeds in a single layer.
4. Once the oven temperature has reached 325 degrees, put the sheet in the oven and bake until the seeds are dry and golden brown, 15 to 40 minutes (this will depend on how big they are when you start, and how wet).
5. Set aside to cool, stirring with the spoon or spatula every 10 minutes or so. Serve right away or store in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

GET CREATIVE

When the seeds are almost done, stir in one of the following for the last 5 minutes or so of baking:

- ½ teaspoon chili powder
- ½ teaspoon curry powder
- ½ teaspoon Old Bay or Creole spice blend
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon brown sugar and ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon



PRACTICE GRATITUDE

If you're not going to get to go trick-or-treating this year, you might feel disappointed. That's okay. You can talk about that feeling with a trusted friend or family member. Afterward, try listing 5 (other) favorite things about this month—either October in general, or this October in particular. If you don't feel like writing them down, you can draw them instead.

FOOD HISTORY

People in the Americas have been eating pumpkin seeds since at least the time of the Aztecs, when squash, along with corn and beans, was cultivated in the West. The trio is sometimes referred to as the "Three Sisters."

KITCHEN SCIENCE: ROTTEN JACK OBSERVATION JOURNAL

If you have a good spot to leave your jack-o'-lantern after Halloween, you can observe the process of decay (rotting). Simply go outside every day with a notebook and pen, note the date and time, and write down a few things you see and some theories about them. Is the pumpkin getting shriveled up? Why do you think that happens? Do you see any black or white furry stuff growing anywhere? Do you know what it is? Are any animals interested in the pumpkin? Do an internet search to look up anything you're not sure about, like "Why is my jack-o'-lantern fuzzy?" When it finally collapses completely, note how long it's been since you first put it outside.

Get Moving: Pumpkin Workout

Make the most of your jack-o'-lantern with a quick fitness routine!
To add a little creepy Halloween ambience, put on the "Monster Mash."
Then ready, set, squat:

1. Hold a pumpkin in your arms at chest height.
2. Bend at your knees and hips, sticking your rear end out like you're sitting in an imaginary chair. Keep your chest lifted.
3. Squat down as low as you can, keeping your head and chest lifted and keeping your knees over your ankles. Press your weight back into your heels.
4. Push through your heels to bring yourself back to the starting position.
5. See if you can do a set of 5 squats. If you need to, you can put down the pumpkin!



For related fun, check out the picture book *Pumpkin Jack* by Will Hubbell.

**DID
YOU
KNOW?**

According to Guinness World Records, the heaviest squash ever was (no surprise) a pumpkin! It was grown in Rhode Island in 2017 and weighed 2,118 pounds. That's just over a ton, which is roughly the weight of a small car, a walrus, or the Liberty Bell.

JACK-O'-LANTERN MATH

Here's a fun estimating activity you can do with your family! All you need is a pumpkin (or another squash or large vegetable), some string and scissors, and a pencil and paper. Ask everyone to look at the pumpkin and then (without using the pumpkin to measure) cut a piece of string they think will be just long enough to go around the pumpkin's middle, like a belt. Once everyone has cut their string, try putting each string around the pumpkin. Mark down whether each was too long, too short, or just right. Who got closest? Did they have a particular strategy, or did they just get lucky? (Try it again with anything else you can fit a string around, like a big pot or a grapefruit!)

EDIBLE VOCABULARY

The Spanish word *pepitas* refers to green pumpkin seeds without their shells, which you can buy at the grocery store either raw or already roasted. They're great for snacking on—or topping your salad or oatmeal!