

Acorn Squash Cooking Tips

You'll need to remove the fibers and seeds from the center of the acorn squash before steaming, broiling or baking.

Save the acorn squash seeds to toast for snacking just as you would pumpkin seeds.

A sturdy knife to slice acorn squash in half is a necessity. To make the squash easier to cut, pierce the skin in a few spots, place it in a microwave oven and heat on high for 2 minutes.

Let stand for another few minutes before carving.

When halving, cut through the stem end to the point rather than across the diameter.

To prevent halves from rocking on the baking tray, cut a small slice off the bottom to flatten it.

The ribbed shape of the acorn squash makes peeling it virtually impossible, but wonderful for stuffing with a wide variety of fillings. It is most often served cooked in its shell. If you need the pulp only, you will need to cook it first and then scoop the pulp from the skin. It is done when the flesh is very tender, usually about one hour baking time at 400 degrees F. for halved squash. Timing depends on the size of the squash, but it's difficult to overbake.

Avoid boiling acorn squash. Boiling damages both the flavor and the texture.

To quickly microwave acorn squash, cut two whole squash in half, cover and cook for 13 minutes on high. Do not add water.

Acorn squash can also be cooked whole. Pierce the skin in several places. Place on a baking sheet in 350-degree oven for about 1-1/2 hours. Squeeze the squash to test for doneness. When it yields to gentle pressure, it's done. You can then cut it in half, scoop out the seeds and serve or cool and use the cooked innards.

The deeper the yellowish orange color of the flesh, the sweeter it is. If you end up with a stringy squash, you can beat the pulp with an electric mixer on high speed for ten seconds and then switch to low speed for sixty seconds. The strings should wrap around the beaters for easy removal.

Ginger and cinnamon really bring out the flavor of acorn squash.

