

FoodWise Nutrition

January 2021 Newsletter



Healthy Choices, Healthy Lives

WHAT IS FOODWISE?

FoodWise is federally funded statewide by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). We advance healthy eating habits, active lifestyles and healthy community environments for Wisconsin residents with limited incomes through nutrition education at the individual, community and systems levels.

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FOOD RESOURCES

Food Box Programs-Addressing Food Insecurity in the Time of Covid-19—Food Insecurity is a stark reality that many Americans face. In 2020, those numbers are growing rapidly. According to a recent report by Feeding America (SEPT 2020), Minnesota and Wisconsin each rank in the top five in terms of states with the highest projected increase in food insecurity from 2018 to 2020. One tool in the Coronavirus response food security toolkit that many organizations have successfully utilized is the food



FoodWise Coordinator, Stephanie Bakker, recently attended the food box giveaway in Red Cliff. She volunteered and captured images of the impactful work the different tribal programs have done to help feed the community during the pandemic.

box model. Food boxes are prepackaged boxes containing a variety of foods that can be distributed in a safe and socially distant, drive-through manner. There are many variations of these programs at work in our communities. One such program, is through the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) which is a USDA sponsored food relief program. Second Harvest Northern Lakes Food Bank has partnered with many local organizations and has held food box distributions over the last several months in Ashland County and Bayfield County. These programs have no eligibility requirements and are open to anyone who is in need. Participants can even pick up for family, friends, and neighbors in need (limit 4 households). Second Harvest also partners with the mobile food pantry in Iron County to provide food support on the last Monday of each month. The next one takes place on Monday, January 25.

Through the CFAP program, boxes usually include meat, mixed produce and dairy and cheese. One recent CFAP food box distribution was held on October 28, 2020 in Washburn WI, sponsored by Bayfield County, and 632 households participated. Both the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa have also hosted food box giveaways in the past several months. Recently, Red Cliff hosted a food box distribution on Thursday Dec. 3 in coordination with the Hunger Task Force. Food Box programs are just one piece of the puzzle to helping support our communities and neighbors as we face so many challenges in 2020, food security a mighty one among them.

RECIPES OF THE MONTH

Get creative in the kitchen and find unique ways to make healthy foods the main attraction at your winter celebrations. Use cookie cutters to add a seasonal twist to your favorite foods! Follow the steps below to create a snowy scene using foods from all 5 food groups!

INGREDIENTS

- 2 slices whole-grain bread
- Peanut butter
- 1 banana
- a handful of raisins
- 5-6 pretzel sticks
- 2 slices of low-fat cheese
- Your favorite green veggie (we used a bell pepper)
- 1/2 cup air-popped popcorn (or light colored cereal).

SUPPLIES

- Knife for spreading
- Cutting board
- Snowman cookie cutter
- Small snowflake cookie cutter
- Plate (solid color works best)

DIRECTIONS

1. Make a peanut butter and banana sandwich. Then, cut out a snowman from the center.*



2. Cut snowflakes from the cheese slices.* (Tip: Don't have a snowflake cookie cutter? Use a plain circle and create snowballs instead!)
3. Now let's create the scene! Move your snowman to the plate and give him a face, hat, buttons, and arms. If it's cold outside, he may need a scarf too.
4. Add a background by covering the ground in "snow" and planting "trees."
5. Let it snow! Add cheese snowflakes or snowballs to complete the scene on your plate.
6. Have fun and make it your own. Try orange or yellow low-fat cheese to add stars or a sun to the sky. Plant extra trees, build a house, or make a snowman family!

**Note: Enjoy leftovers from the sandwich or snowflakes as a snack or refrigerate and save for later.*

WINTER FUN!

Have you ever wanted to try snowshoeing but haven't had the opportunity? Well, you are in luck!

The **Extension Iron**

County office has snowshoes available for families to use for **FREE!**

They can be also be checked out by schools and other organizations that would like to get out and enjoy the snow.

For more information, contact **Extension Iron County Office Manager, Rebecca Holm** at **715-561-2695** or **rebecca.holm@wisc.edu**.

And after you're done snowshoeing, warm up with the hot pumpkin drink recipe to the right.



HOT PUMPKIN DRINK

This drink is perfect for warming your belly on a cold winter day!

INGREDIENTS

- 2 1/2 cups milk
- 1/3 cup pumpkin puree
- 2 TBSP maple or pancake syrup

- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

DIRECTIONS

1. Combine all ingredients in a saucepan.
2. Stir constantly until hot with a whisk or fork over medium heat. This will take 6-8 minutes.
3. Froth the pumpkin drink right before serving if desired. Use an immersion blender, blender, or food processor.



CHEQUAMEGON BAY



HARVEST
of the **MONTH**

January

WINTER SQUASH

One of the oldest cultivated foods in the Western Hemisphere, squash seeds have been dated back to 8,000 BCE in Mexico. In both North and South America, the seeds and flesh of squash were an important part of the pre-Columbian Indian diet.

Native Americans dubbed squash one of the “Three Sisters” (the siblings are beans and corn) and relied on it for food as well as containers and utensils, thanks to the fruit’s hard shell.

Today, winter squash is commercially grown in Mexico and Costa Rica and, in the U.S., in California and Florida. But you’re likely to have local growers of this easy-to-grow vegetable no matter where you live.

The exact nutrients in a winter squash depend on its variety. In general, we can count on winter squash being low in fat and calories and a good-to-excellent source of vitamin A (in the form of beta carotene, an antioxidant), vitamin C, fiber, magnesium and potassium. It also provides niacin, folate and iron. The darker the orange color of the flesh, the more beta-carotene the squash provides.

When it comes to winter squash, we’re talking a wide variety of fun and quirky-looking produce, from knotty hubbards to smooth butternuts and outrageous turbans. Come fall, there’s no better table decoration than an assortment of winter squash!



Did you know?

- ✓ The carotenoid antioxidants in winter squash may aid in cancer prevention.
- ✓ You can eat the seeds from winter squash, just like pumpkin seeds. Squash seeds contain two healthy oils, linoleic acid and oleic acid.
- ✓ Winter squash is loaded with vitamin A (good for eye health) and vitamin C.
- ✓ There is some evidence that properties in winter squash make it an excellent anti-inflammatory food.
- ✓ Evidence suggests that polysaccharides in winter squash may help regulate blood sugar.

Brought to you by the
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HARVEST OF THE MONTH

Choosing Your Squash

With a dozen common varieties readily available, choosing a winter squash to prepare can be confusing. Here are descriptions of common varieties, as well as some handy tips for selecting the right squash for you and plenty of delicious squash recipes you'll love.

General selection tips

Winter squash are harvested late summer through fall, then "cured" or "hardened off" in open air to toughen their exterior. This process ensures the squash will keep for months without refrigeration. Squash that has been hurried through this step and improperly cured will appear shiny and may be tender enough to be pierced by your fingernail. When selecting any variety of winter squash, the stem is the best indication of ripeness. Stems should be tan, dry, and on some varieties, look fibrous and frayed, or corky. Fresh green stems and those leaking sap signal that the squash was harvested before it was ready. Ripe squash should have vivid, saturated (deep) color and a matte, rather than glossy, finish.

Acorn

This forest green, deeply ribbed squash resembles its namesake, the acorn. It has yellow-orange flesh and a tender-firm texture that holds up when cooked. Acorn's mild flavor is versatile, making it a traditional choice for stuffing and baking. The hard rind is not good for eating, but helps the squash hold its shape when baked.

Blue Hubbard

Good for feeding a crowd, these huge, bumpy textured squash look a bit like a giant gray lemon, tapered at both ends and round in the middle. A common heirloom variety, Blue Hubbard has an unusual, brittle blue-gray outer shell, a green rind, and bright orange flesh. Unlike many other winter squashes, they are only mildly sweet, but have a buttery, nutty flavor and a flaky, dry texture similar to a baked potato.

Butternut

Butternut squash are named for their peanut-like shape and smooth, beige coloring. Butternut is a good choice for recipes calling for a large amount of squash because they are dense—the seed cavity is in the small bulb opposite the stem end, so the large stem is solid squash. Their vivid orange flesh is sweet and slightly nutty with a smooth texture that falls apart as it cooks. Although the rind is edible, butternut is usually peeled before use.

Delicata

This oblong squash is butter yellow in color with green mottled striping in shallow ridges. Delicata has a thin, edible skin that is easy to work with but makes it a poor squash for long-term storage; this is why you'll only find them in the fall. The rich, sweet yellow flesh is flavorful and tastes like chestnuts, corn, and sweet potatoes.

Heart of Gold/Festival/Carnival

These colorful, festive varieties of squash are all hybrids resulting from a cross between Sweet Dumpling and Acorn, and are somewhere between the two in size. Yellow or cream with green and orange mottling, these three can be difficult to tell apart, but for culinary purposes, they are essentially interchangeable. With a sweet nutty flavor like Dumpling, and a tender-firm texture like Acorn, they are the best of both parent varieties.

Kabocha (Green or Red)

Kabocha can be dark green with mottled blue-gray striping, or a deep red-orange color that resembles Red Kuri. You can tell the difference between red Kabocha and Red Kuri by their shape: Kabocha is round but flattened at stem end, instead of pointed. The flesh is smooth, dense, and intensely yellow. They are similar in sweetness and texture to a sweet potato.

Pie Pumpkin

Pie pumpkins differ from larger carving pumpkins in that they have been bred for sweetness and not for size. They are uniformly orange and round with an inedible rind, and are sold alongside other varieties of winter squash (unlike carving pumpkins which are usually displayed separately from winter squash). These squash are mildly sweet and have a rich pumpkin flavor that is perfect for pies and baked goods. They make a beautiful centerpiece when hollowed out and filled with pumpkin soup.

Red Kuri

These vivid orange, beta carotene-saturated squash are shaped like an onion, or teardrop. They have a delicious chestnut-like flavor, and are mildly sweet with a dense texture that holds shape when steamed or cubed, but smooth and velvety when pureed, making them quite versatile.

Spaghetti

These football-sized, bright yellow squash are very different from other varieties in this family. Spaghetti squash has a pale golden interior, and is stringy and dense—in a good way! After sliced in half and baked, use a fork to pry up the strands of flesh and you will see it resembles and has the texture of perfectly cooked spaghetti noodles. These squash are not particularly sweet but have a mild flavor that takes to a wide variety of preparations.

Cooking Corner

ROASTED SQUASH & CRAISIN SALAD



Ingredients

- 2 cups winter squash, peeled, seeded and cubed
- 2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 Tbsp honey
- 1 Tbsp maple syrup
- 1 clove minced Garlic
- 1 tsp Dijon-style mustard
- 4 oz. fresh spinach or other greens
- 1/4 cup dried cranberries
- 2 Tbsp roasted winter squash seeds, toasted
- olive oil, salt, and pepper

Preparation

Spread squash evenly on baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil; season with salt and pepper. Bake at 400°F 15-20 minutes or until tender. Add cranberries to pan for last 5 minutes. Mix balsamic vinegar, honey, maple syrup, garlic, mustard and in small bowl. Whisk in 1 Tbsp olive oil; season with salt and pepper, to taste. Set aside. Combine spinach, squash, cranberries and squash seeds in large bowl. Drizzle with vinaigrette; toss to coat.

Created for the Healthy CHANGE COALITION by Sara Beadle, Chequamegon Food Co-op. Questions? Contact Sara at (715) 682-8251 or sarab@cheqfood.coop.

