

# FOOD FOR FITNESS AND FUN

November- 2008

*This month my focus is winter squash and Thanksgiving food safety. I hope you'll try preparing winter squash in the microwave because it's easy, inexpensive and bountiful in nutrients. Wishing you Happy and Safe Thanksgiving - Jan Temple*

## WINTER SQUASH

Fall is the time of year to harvest winter squash. Depending on the variety you choose, a ½ cup serving of cooked winter squash may provide almost 100% of the RDA for Vitamin A for an entire day for women.

There are several different varieties of winter squash available to choose from. Many of us are familiar with acorn and butternut. **Acorn** is usually green in color with deep ridges and is in the shape of an acorn. **Butternut** squash is an elongated bell shaped squash with a smooth tan skin. Its flesh is deep orange—a good indicator of being a rich source of Vitamin A; it tastes sweeter than acorn squash.



When selecting squash, look for squash that has a dry, smooth rind with no cracks or soft spots. You want the rind to be dull; a shiny rind may indicate that the squash was harvested too early and may not have the full sweetness of a mature squash. Acorn squash may have splashes of orange but avoid those with more than half of the rind being orange. Butternut squash should not have any green tinge to it. When possible, choose squash with a dry stem attached. When buying a cut squash, look for good inside color and fine-grained flesh.

### **QUICK CURRIED SQUASH SOUP** – SERVES 4 *Only four ingredients – no cutting or chopping. Just heat. Eat.*

|   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1 15 oz. can pumpkin                        | 1/2 cup water or skim milk |
| 1 14.5 oz. can broth (low sodium preferred) | 1 teaspoon curry powder    |

Combine pumpkin, broth, water or milk and curry together. Heat on stove or in microwave until hot.  
*Each serving: 65 calories, 1 g fat, .4 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, .6 mg cholesterol, 49 mg sodium, 12 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, 4 g protein.*



## **SAVORY CURRIED SQUASH SOUP** –

SERVES 10

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 Tablespoon margarine                  | 3 cups water <u>or</u> low sodium chicken broth <u>or</u> vegetable broth |
| 2 cups onions, chopped                  | 1 apple cored and chopped   |
| 4 teaspoons curry powder                | Salt and pepper to taste  |
| 2 stalks celery, sliced (optional)      | 1 cup apple juice, cider, or low fat milk                                 |
| 2 medium butternut squash (about 3 lbs) |   |

In a large pan, melt margarine over low heat. Add onions, curry and celery. Cover and simmer for about 5 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Peel, seed and cube squash, add with chopped apples and liquid (water, stock or broth) and bring to a boil over medium heat. Reduce heat and simmer 25 to 30 minutes or until squash and apples are tender. Use an immersion blender to puree the soup adding juice or milk to desired consistency. Season. Heat and serve immediately.

*Each serving: 118 calories, 2 g fat, .4 g saturated fat, .2 g trans fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 49 mg sodium, 25 g carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, 3 g protein.*

## **SQUASH W/APPLES & CRANBERRIES**

– SERVES 2

*This dish will tantalize your taste buds with the sweet apple and tart cranberries nested in golden winter squash. Prepared in the microwave, you can get this to the table in a hurry.*

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1 acorn squash            | 2 teaspoons orange juice                 |
| 1 apple, cored, chopped   | 2 Tablespoons brown sugar                |
| 1/2 cup fresh cranberries | 1 Tablespoon almonds, chopped (optional) |

Heat the washed whole squash in the microwave on High for 2 minutes (easier cutting). Cut the squash in half; remove seeds. Place the squash, cut side down, into a microwave safe dish with 2 tablespoons water. Cover and cook on high in the microwave for 4 minutes. Meanwhile, combine the chopped apple, cranberries and orange juice. Remove squash from the oven, turn each half cut side up and fill each center with half the fruit mixture. Divide brown sugar and sprinkle over each half. Add almonds if desired. Return to microwave for additional 4-5 minutes on High or until tender.

*Each serving: 191 calories, 2 g fat, .2 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 10 mg sodium, 45 g carbohydrate, 7 g fiber, 3 g protein.*

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## ROASTING A FROZEN TURKEY



It's okay and actually safer to cook the turkey from a frozen state. A frozen turkey will not have juices spread around the kitchen, will not waste water as you try to thaw it, and will produce an excellent and juicy product. It is critical that the final temperature of the deep portions of the turkey reach 165°F minimum for food safety purposes. The Turkey Federation recommends that for quality purposes, the temperature reach 175° to 180°F in the leg/thigh portion. What about the giblets? These can be removed from the center cavity after about 3 hours of cooking. If they are in a paper bag, they can be left until the turkey is done. Here are the directions for cooking a frozen turkey.

### REQUIREMENTS:

- a food thermometer (bimetallic quick read or digital quick read);
- a large shallow baking pan and rack;
- aluminum foil;
- a turkey 12-15 lbs;
- oven pre-heated to 325°F.

**TIME:** Will depend upon size and temperature. Plan on 5 – 5½ hours for a 12-14 lb turkey and measure temperature.

**END TEMPERATURE:** A minimum of 165°F at deepest part of breast or thigh. Desirable 175° - 180°F not for food safety but for quality.

### PROCEDURE:

1. Pre-heat the oven to 325°F making sure that the shelving will fit the turkey (middle shelf).
2. Line the shallow baking pan with aluminum foil and place the rack in the pan.
3. On a clean surface, unwrap the frozen turkey and place the turkey on the rack.
4. Put the turkey into the oven and bake.
5. At 3 hours, determine if you can remove the giblets package.
6. At 4 to 5 hours, measure temperature at deepest point in breast. Minimum temperature should be 165°F before removing from oven. If not at 165°F, leave in oven.
7. When 165°F is reached in the breast, remove the turkey from oven and place a foil tent over it. Let it rest for 20-30 minutes before carving.
8. Refrigerate leftovers as promptly as is possible.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED THANKSGIVING FOOD QUESTIONS –

### **I LEFT THE GIBLETS INSIDE THE TURKEY CAVITY WHILE IT WAS IN THE OVEN. IS IT SAFE TO EAT?**

If giblets were left in the cavity during roasting, even though this is not recommended, the turkey and giblets are probably safe to use. However, if the packaging containing the giblets has changed shape or melted in any way during cooking, do not use the giblets or the turkey because harmful chemicals from the packaging may have penetrated the surrounding meat.

### **DO PUMPKIN PIES HAVE TO BE KEPT REFRIGERATED? GROCERY STORES DON'T HAVE THEM REFRIGERATED.**

Pumpkin Pie may be left at room temperature for up to two hours after baking. Once cooled (cooling process normally takes about two hours), cover loosely with plastic wrap and refrigerate for up to 2-3 days. If warm pie is preferred it can be warmed in the microwave. Keep in mind that pumpkin pie is at its very best when served the day it's baked. Remember, pumpkin pie is a custard-type pie, so freezing is not recommended.



### **ARE THERE CAUTIONS I NEED TO OBSERVE WHEN PREPARING "STUFFING" IN THE SLOW COOKER? YES. FOLLOW THESE TIPS:**

- Use well beaten pasteurized eggs or 1/2 cup pasteurized egg product like Egg Beaters
- Never mix wet and dry ingredients until you are ready to cook the dressing.
- Do not fill the cooker less than 1/2 or more than 2/3 full.
- Stir once or twice if desired or the dressing may get crusty on the side.



- Check the final temperature with an accurate food thermometer. End temperature should be 165°F.

*These questions (and others that arise in managing a home) can be answered by AnswerLine, a joint project between Iowa State University Extension and Minnesota University Extension. Since March 1975, AnswerLine has been responding to over 20,000 questions a year with reliable research based information to help you make sound decisions. Help is just a phone call away – 1-800-262-3804.*

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