



Why Delicata Squash Is a Fall Favorite—and How to Make the Most of It

By Mary Margaret Chappell
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Lusciously sweet delicata squash is one of autumn's most prized farmers market finds. The striped, oblong gourd is named for its skin, which is—well—delicate. For decades, the heirloom veggie wasn't widely known or used because its thin skin made it more perishable than other [winter squash](#). Then, in the early 21st century, researchers at Cornell University bred a delicata variety that is resistant to mold and mildew, and the rest is history. Cooks quickly discovered delicata's delicious qualities: its golden, creamy flesh with a sweetness akin to a sweet potato and, of course, that thin, edible skin. Here's how to shop for, prep, store, and enjoy the fall gem.

Get 'em While You Can

Not just at farmers markets, delicata squash is now widely available at grocery stores. The long, lightly ridged squash appear early in the fall season and tend to disappear from produce displays in late fall. If you want to stock up, choose firm, medium-size squash with no signs of bruising, mold, or powdery mildew. Store the squash in a cool, dry place for up to three months, and do not refrigerate. The moist atmosphere of the fridge can promote the development of mold and mildew.

Microwave Hack

Like other rock-hard winter squash, delicatas can be tricky to cut, even with a sharp knife. One solution is to soften the flesh in the microwave. Simply prick the squash several times with the tip of a knife, then microwave on high power for 2 minutes. Let the squash cool 15 minutes (remember, microwaves heat from the

inside out!) before cutting, seeding, and using in recipes.

Use a grapefruit spoon to remove delicata squash seeds. The serrated edges help scrape away seeds and strands from the narrow cavity.

How to Prep Delicata Squash

Here's how to cut delicata squash into different shapes.

Boats



Halve squash lengthwise, then scoop out the seeds with a spoon for boats that can be stuffed or served on their own. No need to peel; the edible skin gets tender as it cooks.

Half-Moons

(continued)

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Start by prepping squash boats (see above). Place them flat-side-down on a cutting board, then slice the halves into ¼- to ½-inch-thick half-moons. Roast, sauté, steam, or use in soups or stews.

Rings



Halve the squash through the center (crosswise), then scoop out the seeds from each half. Slice the halves into ½- to 1-inch-thick rings that can be roasted, baked, steamed, or stuffed.

Delicata Squash Recipes



Try one of these wholesome vegan delicata squash recipes today!

- [Delicata Squash Tacos](#)
- [Balsamic-Roasted Delicata Squash Salad](#)
- [Delicata Squash with Creole Quinoa Stuffing](#)
- [Delicata Squash Boats with Cauliflower Bechamel](#)
- [Sage Lentil Stew with Squash and Mushrooms](#)
- [Winter Squash Soup with Pistachio Gremolata](#)
- [Roasted Garlic, Delicata Squash, and Farro Stew](#)