

**October, 2019**

It's fall ya'll!

That means a new crop of produce has hit the markets. Fall fruits and vegetables offer so much nutrition, intense flavor, and richer textures. One in particular that people often shy away from, is the spaghetti squash. It comes in a variety of shapes and colors, from light yellow to orange.

When cut open, the squash looks like most other squash with large seeds in the center. However, when cooked, the flesh separates into fine strands that resembles 'spaghetti', but retains some of the crunch and distinct flavor of squash.

This makes for a healthier option to pasta and a lower amount of carbohydrate.

There are many ways to prepare it – try one on for size!

### **Spaghetti Squash**

1 large (4-4.5-pound) spaghetti squash

Cook spaghetti squash using one of the methods listed below:

**Bake it:** Using a sharp knife, cut the squash in half lengthwise; remove seeds and discard. Drizzle with oil. Place, cut-side down in a baking pan. Bake at 350 degrees F for 45-50 minutes, or until the squash is easily pierced with a paring knife.

**Boil it:** Heat a pot of water large enough to hold the entire squash. When the water is boiling, drop in the squash and cook for 20-30 minutes, depending on its size. When a fork goes easily into the flesh, the squash is done.

**Microwave it:** Cut squash in half lengthwise; remove seeds and discard. Place squash cut-side up in a microwave dish with ¼ cup water. Cover with a plastic wrap and cook on high for 10-12 minutes, depending on the size of the squash. Add more cooking time if necessary. Let it stand while covered for 5 minutes.

### **Pesto Spaghetti Sauce with Mozzarella**

#### **Ingredients:**

1 spaghetti squash cooked by your favorite method and separated into strands

1 Tbsp olive oil

¾ cup pesto sauce

4 ounces reduced-fat mozzarella cheese or smoked mozzarella cheese, shredded

¼ cup freshly grated parmesan cheese

**Instructions:**

1. While still hot, use a fork to lift and scrape squash inside the skin. Gently mix in pesto. Mix in cheeses until well mixed and the cheese begins to melt. Serve immediately. Can be reheated in the microwave.

**Spaghetti Squash Lasagna****Ingredients:**

2 small spaghetti squash  
2 tsp olive oil  
4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced  
1 (8-ounce) package fresh baby spinach  
½ cup part-skim ricotta cheese  
1/8 tsp kosher salt  
½ cup shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese, divided  
1½ cups favorite store-bought marinara sauce  
1 ounce parmesan cheese (about ¼ cup)

**Instructions:**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Cut each squash in half, lengthwise. Scoop out seeds; discard. Drizzle with oil. Place squash halves cut-side down on a baking sheet. Bake 350 degrees for 50 minutes. Let it stand 10 minutes. Scrape the inside of the squash with a fork to separate spaghetti-like strands.
3. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add oil to the pan; add garlic, cook for 30 seconds until fragrant. Add spinach; cook until spinach wilts. Remove from heat. Combine spinach mixture, squash strands, ricotta cheese, salt, and half of the mozzarella cheese in a medium bowl.
4. Return skillet to medium-high heat. Add marinara sauce, cover, reduce heat to medium and simmer 4 minutes. Remove from heat.
5. Increase oven to 425 degrees. Spoon sauce evenly into the bottom of each squash half. Top evenly with squash mixture. Sprinkle evenly with mozzarella cheese and parmesan cheese. Bake at 425 degrees for 20 minutes.
6. Preheat broiler to high. Broil squash 1-2 minutes or until cheese is golden brown and bubbly. Remove from oven; let stand 10 minutes.

Yield: 4 servings (1 squash half)

Source: adapted from [www.cookinglight.com](http://www.cookinglight.com)

**Chicken Enchilada-Stuffed Spaghetti Squash****Ingredients:**

2 cups shredded rotisserie chicken  
1 medium spaghetti squash, about 1½ -2 pounds  
½ Tbsp olive oil

1 ½ cups red enchilada sauce  
1 small zucchini, diced  
1 cup shredded Mexican-cheese blend  
Chopped cilantro

**Instructions:**

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Slice spaghetti squash lengthwise and scrape out the seeds. Brush 1/4 Tbsp olive oil into each squash half. Place each spaghetti squash half face down in a large baking dish and bake for 40-50 minutes. When the squash is done, the flesh should be tender and pulled away from the shell.
2. Use a fork to scrape the squash from the shells into a large bowl. Place the shells on a large baking pan. Add 1 cup of enchilada sauce, zucchini, and shredded chicken to the squash. Divide the mixture between the shells and top with the Mexican-cheese blend.
3. Bake in a preheated oven for 10 minutes. To brown the cheese, turn the broiler to high and broil, watching closely until the cheese starts to bubble and brown. Serve garnished with chopped cilantro.

Yield: 2 servings

Source: adapted from [www.eatingwell.com](http://www.eatingwell.com)

For more inspiration and resources, go to [www.fruitsandveggies.org](http://www.fruitsandveggies.org). You'll find what's in season, selection, storage, and cooking of mother's natures treasures. **For personalized tips on nutrition and culinary, boost your fitness plan with a Nutrition Consultation with Cindy Kleckner, RDN, LD, FAND**, registered dietitian nutritionist and culinary expert at the Apex Centre, City of McKinney's Aquatic and Fitness Facility. Contact Cindy at 214-293-5306 [ckleck@aol.com](mailto:ckleck@aol.com).