

Fall, with its crisp air and beautiful golden colors makes me begin craving acorn and butter-nut squashes, sweet potatoes and any other food that is orange. As I have said many times before in this column, I love to make soups as we get into the colder weather and it's also the time we can start using the oven again after avoiding it all during the summer. Roasting vegetables has become quite the craze in the past few years, and I have become addicted to roasted sweet potatoes, but there are so many other recipes for these colorful foods. In addition to the above-mentioned, there are also pumpkins, Hubbard, buttercup and spaghetti squashes.

These winter squashes are harvested when they are mature and are plentiful from October through February. When shopping, they should all feel hard and have no cracks or blemishes. Hubbard and acorn squashes should be a blue-gray or green; buttercup should be dark green with lighter strips or flecks and all will develop orange patches as they ripen. Butternut squash should be tan, pumpkins bright orange and spaghetti squash yellow. All varieties can be stored in net bags hung in a cool, dry place.

Old-time recipes always called for you to cut the squash in half and bake, but I find that poking some holes in it and baking it a little first makes it a lot easier to cut and clean readying it for your recipe. You all know the common recipes for these squashes so, as always, I am going to give you two unusual dishes to prepare. I hope you enjoy them.

Sweet Potato Waffles – Serves 4

1 cup mashed peeled, baked sweet potatoes



by Cathy Smith

1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted
 2 eggs, separated
 1 cup milk
 1 cup sifted all-purpose flour
 2 tsp. baking powder
 1/2 tsp. salt

Preheat your waffle iron. In a bowl, combine the sweet potatoes, butter, egg yolks, and milk and beat until blended. Add the flour, baking powder and salt and stir until smooth.

In a separate bowl, beat the egg whites until stiff but not dry. Carefully fold into the batter. Bake according to your waffle iron directions and serve hot with your favorite maple syrup.

Spaghetti Squash with Carrots, Red Peppers & Basil – Serves 6

1 2-lb spaghetti squash
 2 Tb. olive oil
 1 cup red peppers, julienned
 1 cup carrots, julienned

1/2 tsp. salt
 1 tsp. sugar
 1/4 tsp. pepper
 3 Tb. unseasoned rice vinegar
 1/4 cup of fresh basil, chopped
 1/4 cup roasted peanuts, chopped

Preheat the oven to 350°. Prick the squash all over with a fork. Place in a baking pan and bake for about 1-1/2 hours or until tender. Let cool, then cut it in half; remove and discard all the seeds. With a fork, scrape out the flesh into spaghetti like strands. Keep warm.

In a large sauté pan, heat the olive oil. Add the carrots and red peppers and stir fry for about 2 minutes. Stir in the salt, sugar and pepper, then add the squash and stir fry until all is heated through. Sprinkle on the vinegar and stir again. Serve garnished with basil and peanuts.

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As of this writing I am headed for Louisiana once again to work with the FEMA Disaster Relief Team. It's hard to believe that these people are going through this a second time. I can only hope it's not anywhere near as bad as Katrina.

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