

ROASTED BUTTERNUT SQUASH WITH CRANBERRIES AND PECANS

adapted from farmlifediy.com

1 large butternut squash, cubed	1/2 tsp pepper
3 Tbsp butter	1/4 tsp cayenne (optional)
2 1/2 Tbsp brown sugar	1/2 c pecans
1 1/2 tsp cinnamon	1/3 c dried cranberries
1/2 tsp salt	

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Melt butter in a bowl. Combine brown sugar, cinnamon, salt, pepper, and cayenne.
3. Toss squash cubes in 3/4 of the melted butter mixture. Spread on a parchment paper lined baking sheet. Bake squash 20 minutes.
4. After 20 minutes, stir squash well. In a bowl, combine the pecans and cranberries with the remaining butter mixture. Add the pecans and cranberries to the baking sheet in a single layer.
5. Roast another 20 minutes, stirring halfway through.

AIR FRYER SWEET POTATO HASH

Adapted from delish.com

1 large sweet potato, 1/2-in cubes	1 1/2 tsp smoked paprika
1 yellow onion, finely chopped	salt and pepper
1 red bell pepper, finely chopped	2 scallions, thinly sliced
3 Tbsp olive oil	Chopped fresh dill, for serving

1. In a medium bowl, toss sweet potato, onion, bell pepper, oil, paprika, 1 tsp salt, and 1/4 tsp pepper to combine.
2. Working in batches, in an air fryer basket, arrange potato mixture in a single layer. Cook at 400°F, tossing halfway through, until potatoes are browned in spots and cooked through, about 14 minutes.
3. Transfer potato mixture to a platter. Top with scallions and dill.

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Fall CSA News



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Leafy Greens: Store leafy greens in the fridge in a perforated plastic bag. If you chop and wash ahead of time, spin the leaves dry before putting back in the bag with a dry paper towel to absorb moisture. Refresh as needed by plunging them in ice water 15-20 minutes.

Fall Squash: Store all fall squash in a cool, dry, dark place at around 50-70 degrees. They get sweeter in storage as the starch converts to sugar. Once cut, wrap in plastic and refrigerate for up to a week.

Apples: Store apples in a bag in your refrigerator. Keep in mind that apples are prone to absorb the odors of the produce around them, so don't place them close to onions or potatoes.

Sweet Potato: Store at room temperature. Refrigeration will cause them to harden and blacken when cooked. Check weekly and use any that may soften, most will keep for weeks or months.

Pears: There is no "right" time to eat a pear but you can tell ripeness by lightly squeezing. If you don't know what ripeness you like, experiment and eat them at all the stages of green to yellow! To speed up ripening, put pears in a closed paper bag with an already-ripe apple or banana. Check daily. To slow down ripening, refrigerate.

Point of Reference

In 2024, it's undeniable that eating fruits and veggies is good for your health. Access to fresh, wholesome produce, along with protein, is exactly what we all need, all year, to be physically able to prosper on the individual and community levels. As small farmers, we have new technologies, equipment, high tunnels, and other fancy stuff to grow good food and get it to you. But not so very long ago, eating well looked very different than it does today.

While pondering all this one morning, I caught sight of the Yearbook of Agriculture 1910, the annual report from the USDA Secretary to the President of the United States. I had snatched it out of a recycling pile at a college 30 years ago. I opened it to the page where Secretary Wilson was describing to President Taft how codling moth was becoming an economic threat to the apple growing regions in the East. The words conveyed a tone of concern that people that would no longer have access to the vital nutrients of the fruit. In response, the Secretary enacted an education and incentive program to help growers deploy a sufficient number of birdhouses to get the situation under control.

It was interesting to learn that in 1910, European Starlings originally released in Central Park by some do-gooder had migrated over 50 miles into New Jersey. Today we have realized that a starling population has been established across the entire United States in such large numbers that they are considered a pest in some situations. You might have noticed the huge flocks making interesting swooping patterns, called murmurations, in the sky as they move across great distance.

William Taylor, Pomologist and Assistant Chief of the then-USDA Bureau of Plant Industry reported on promising new fruits that farmers might consider planting. Apple varieties were being evaluated for insect and disease resistance. Reference was made to moving scions of apples and peaches from specific trees on specific farms, for growers to then graft onto existing trees, then pass some of the new growth along to other growers in subsequent years.

The 1910 report also showed images of train boxcars in California being hooked up to some Rube Goldberg chilling contraption before heading out on the long trip back east. Roads and railways were the responsibility of the USDA back then, in order to get the goods to market. This did not sound like the land of plenty. In fact, this reminds me of when I was a child, and an orange in my Christmas stocking was considered special. Now I realize it actually was. Thanks Santa!

The Secretary also announced that cheese was, in fact, a good source of protein, not just a specialty item for the elite. Plans were being put into play to coordinate the supply of milk to make lots of cheese as a public health benefit. Not long after

this revelation, Kentucky cheese plants popped up in most every community of any size throughout the Bluegrass. I think the ones in Harrodsburg and Cynthiana just recently closed. The eureka moment came along pretty quickly that government could balance the over-abundant summertime milk supply by providing cheese protein all winter. We call it the school lunch program today.

Eggs arrived at the local general store on wagons, not for local consumption since everybody had their own, but were held awaiting backhaul to the big city. Holding eggs without refrigeration was problematic in the South especially, so candling stations were set up in each city to sort out stale and/or partially incubated eggs.

The sense of responsibility the Secretary felt to educate farmers about growing and selling into urban markets, for public health reasons, was palpable. The Agricultural Experiment Stations established in 1862 and 1890 became the conduit of information from the collective vision of the USDA out to individual landowners and farmers. You might now know these institutions as the UK College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment, and Kentucky State University. UK and KSU continue to this day to educate and equip Kentucky farmers.

The Secretary reported that there was much need to educate housewives of proper preservation of foods, indicating the seasonality concerns of Americans feeding themselves, and by doing so, staying healthy and productive. All that is a good reminder that our great-grandmothers had to process vegetables in jars in a water bath, and stash tubers in root cellars, just to eat produce in the winter!

There was precious little information in the report about fruits and vegetables, outside of apples, potatoes, and the California produce tasked with getting over the Rockies in timely fashion. The lack of detail leads me to think growing and selling fresh fruits and vegetables was localized, and outside the purview of the USDA. Back then, apple varieties were evaluated on their storage qualities, not the shape and color concerns of today. When the potatoes were almost gone, folks had to stop eating them, to save some for planting next year's crop.

We live in the land of plenty, but I wonder if as a society we have not handled the bounty well? So many Americans are sick, and a lot of synthetic stuff is mixed and offered as food products. The cheap food policy in this country was just germinating in 1910, and has evolved to be known as the "get big or get out" marketplace of today.

Back in the day of Secretary Wilson's report, everybody was consuming grass-fed milk, meat, and cheese, eating untainted produce, and poultry eggs were everywhere. Now in this day and age, you too can eat just like your great-grandparents, with the added convenience of things like refrigeration and CSA deliveries straight to your door. You know where to find us. – Mac Stone