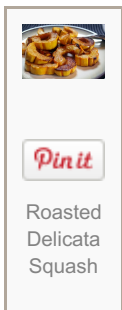


# Better Than Butternut: Roasted Delicata Squash Recipe

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I have a confession to make: I should have posted this recipe a long time ago.

It has been over a year since I discovered delicata squash, and I instantly fell in love. But let me start at the beginning.

Like most people, I hadn't heard of delicata squash before, but was a big fan of butternut. Butternut squash tastes rich and sweet, and has a wonderful texture. It's also very filling, and is a fantastic substitute for more starchy carbohydrates.

But anyone who has tried to cook with butternut squash knows it isn't easy to work with. Butternut squash are huge, have a tough outer skin and take longer than most vegetables to cook through.

Lazy people don't cook butternut squash. And I came to accept the fact that I am one of those people.

But last winter everything changed. Somewhere around the blogosphere I heard that not all winter squash require peeling. To me the difficult (and sometimes painful) peeling is the hardest part of cooking winter squash, so I was instantly intrigued about the possibility of alternatives.

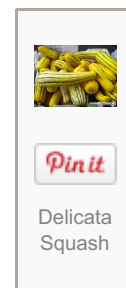
I was delighted to learn the beautiful green Japanese "pumpkin" kabocha squash don't require peeling (woohoo!). I also discovered delicata.

Delicata are much smaller than most winter squash, making them substantially easier to get home from the market and more amenable to the needs of a small household. More important, delicata squash are a cinch to clean, cut and cook, making them any winter squash lover's dream.

Did I mention their flavor is even richer and their texture more creamy than butternut?

I prefer to roast my delicata squash in a metal pan, allowing the outer edges to brown and caramelize. While a Pyrex or ceramic pan will also work, I've found that I get better browning when I use metal to cook in. Foil will likely give you the same effect, but I haven't tried.

The caramelization creates an almost sweet potato like flavor. Fans call the recipe my "squash fries," even though they are baked in the oven. Needless to say I make this recipe all the time.



## Roasted Delicata Squash Recipe

Serves 2-4 as a side dish

**Ingredients:**

- 2-4 delicata squash, depending on size (~1.5 lbs)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- salt to taste

Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

Clean the delicata squash by running under warm water and scrubbing away dirt with your hands. If there are any hard spots on the squash, you can scrape them off with a butter knife.

With a sharp knife, cut delicata in half lengthwise. This should be easy and not require any crazy hacking. With a spoon scoop out the seeds and discard (you can save these and prepare them like pumpkin seeds if you wish). Cut each delicata half into 1/2 inch segments, creating moon-shaped pieces that have slight bumps around the curve.

Arrange the pieces in a single layer in a metal baking pan and coat in 2 tbsp olive oil. Too much oil can make the squash soggy. Salt gently. It's okay if the pieces are a little crowded, but try to maximize the surface area of the squash touching the pan. The browning only occurs where the squash and pan meet.

Place in oven and roast 10 minutes. Using a spatula (I use tongs for most veggies, but delicata squash are easily squished and hold up better if you don't pinch them) turn the squash in the pan so that the light sides are now touching the pan and the brown sides are facing upward.

Continue roasting, turning every 7-10 minutes until both sides of the squash pieces are golden brown and the texture is creamy to the teeth all the way through, about 25-30 minutes. Adjust salt.

Serve as a side dish with the rest of your dinner.

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