

DELICIOUS NUTRITIOUS ADVENTURES

Days of Squash and Pumpkins!

SUBJECTS



NUTRITION



SCIENCE

Aa

LANGUAGE
ARTS

GRADE LEVEL

K-3

TIME

45 min

Days of Squash and Pumpkins!

Objectives

Students will:

- See, say, and spell vocabulary words associated with squash.
- Observe differences between squash.
- Compare and contrast a variety of squash using their senses.
- Recall squash nutrition facts.
- Share a crazy squash fact with their families.
- Create a journal entry to reflect, draw, write and share what they learned during the lesson.

Materials & Preparation

Squash examples for display and tasting. Choose 3-5 options, such as:

- Pumpkin (raw for display, plus roasted or steamed pieces or seeds to sample)
- Butternut squash (raw for display, plus roasted or steamed pieces to sample)
- Acorn squash (raw for display, plus roasted or steamed pieces to sample)
- Spaghetti squash (raw for display, plus roasted or steamed pieces to sample)
- Zucchini, calabazita or other summer squash variety.
- Squash [recipe cards](#)

Read aloud book options:

- Seed, Sprout, Pumpkin, Pie by Jill Esbaum
- Pumpkin Soup by Helen Cooper
- It's a Fruit, It's a Vegetable, It's a Pumpkin by Allan Fowler
- Carlos and the Squash Plant by Jan Romero Stevens
- Mrs. McNosh and the Great Big Squash by Sarah Weeks

Preparation at Home

If using the tasting lesson component:

- Wash, peel and cut cooked squash into small pieces, about 1 - 2 inches and keep in separate containers.
- Set aside the fresh display squash so that kids can observe them and touch them tomorrow. These do not need to be washed.

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Lesson Introduction

(15 minutes)

Part 1: Story Time!

Read aloud from one of the read-aloud book suggestions

Part 2: Getting to Know Squash!

Bring the attention of the class to the whole squash and pumpkin. Introduce each pumpkin and squash by its name. Ask students to repeat the names.

Ask children to observe with their eyes the different squash. Ask them to describe their observations. What's different or alike about each of the varieties?

Ask students if they have eaten squash or pumpkin. If students do not know if they have eaten squash or pumpkin, ask about specific examples, such as pumpkin pie, pumpkin seeds, butternut squash soup or zucchini bread.

Ask students if they think squash is a fruit or a vegetable. Explain that while squash looks like a vegetable and are often cooked like vegetables, they are actually fruit. You can tell because their seeds are inside their flesh. Show students the halved squash.

Ask students what parts of a squash do you think we can eat. After they respond, tell students a crazy squash fact: Many parts of the squash plant, besides its flesh, are edible including the seeds, leaves, tendrils, shoots and even its flowers.

Tell the students you have 6 great facts about squash that you would like to share with them. Write out SQUASH vertically on the board.

S- Strong with VITAMIN C

Q- Quick way to get VITAMIN A

U- Utterly delicious

A- Always packed with FIBER

S- Superfood packed with ANTIOXIDANTS

H- Halloween is pumpkin time!

Introduce taste vocabulary words for pumpkins and squash. Explain to students that two words that are often used to describe squash are SMOOTH and NUTTY. Write words on the board. Ask students to see and say the words.

Explain to the students that people often describe a taste as NUTTY without the food being a nut. Tell students that as we do our tastings, you would like them to think about our new taste word, NUTTY and see if they can identify what someone means when they explain a food as nutty. Can you think of other foods that people might describe as having a NUTTY taste even though they are not a nut?

What are other foods we can think of that have a SMOOTH texture?

Explain to students that some squash can even be SWEET! Like pumpkin pie or roasted butternut squash

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Body of Lesson: Tasting Time!*

(20 minutes)

Part 1: RULES FOR HEALTHY EATING LESSONS

Polite bite: Our first rule is that we ask everyone to take a polite bite.

- Can you tell how something tastes by looking at it? You never know whether you'll like something if you don't try it.
- Please take one small bite so that you can know for sure whether you like it or not.

No-Yuck Zone: Our second rule is that this room is a No-Yuck zone.

- If I try something and say, "That's delicious," you'll all likely want to try it. But if I said, "Ew, that's the worst thing I've ever tasted," no one else will want to try it and you will miss out. Everyone has different taste buds, and it's important to respect that.
- What's a polite way to explain that you don't like what you've tried? "Not tasty to my taste buds."

Part 2: TASTING TIME!

- Pass out pieces of squash, as well as display squash to look at more closely.
- Ask students to taste each squash one by one.
- Ask for observations and record them on the board, if available. Help them make comparisons in taste, texture, and color. Ask, does squash taste sweet or nutty? What is the texture like?
- Discuss how each squash tastes and encourage students to use words like NUTTY, SMOOTH and SWEET as they taste.
- Encourage students to use their five senses as they try each one.

Conclusion

(5 minutes)

Part 3: DISCUSSION

- Which was your favorite squash? Why?
- What is something new that you learned about squash? What is a squash fact you can share with your family?
- What words would you use to describe the taste and texture of squash?
- Thank them for trying new foods and encourage them to make healthy eating choices and share some fun facts about squash with their families.
- Send kids home with squash [recipe cards](#) that they can try making at home for fun

Assessment

(10 minutes)

- At the end of the lesson, have each student create a journal entry about the lesson, using age-appropriate strategies such as drawing, dictating or writing.

*Note: See extension section for optional activities to use if tasting is not feasible for your classroom.

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Extensions

Draw a Pumpkin:

- Supplies: paper, pencils/markers/crayons or paint

Inside/Outside:

- Using adjectives, have students write or say what the outside of a squash looks like. Next, have them do the same for the inside. For example: the outside of the squash is smooth, orange, hard, and bumpy. The inside of the squash is squishy, and full of seeds.

KWL (KNOW, WANT, LEARNED):

- Have students write one sentence about what they KNOW about squash, what they WANT to know and what they have LEARNED

Clap The Syllables:

- Together as a class, clap out the number of syllables for different squash: butternut squash, zucchini, summer squash, pumpkin, acorn squash, etc.

Acrostic Poem:

- Have students write a poem that spells squash. Instruct students to write out the word squash vertically. Each letter of the word squash will become the first letter of each sentence of the poem.

Squash the Action Hero:

- Have students work in pairs to create a comic strip about a squash superhero and squash's power to keep us healthy.

Halloween Storytime:

- Have students write a brief descriptive story about how pumpkins are a big part of celebrating halloween.
- Or, write a story as a class. Have each student contribute one sentence. Collect the sentences and read the full story aloud.

