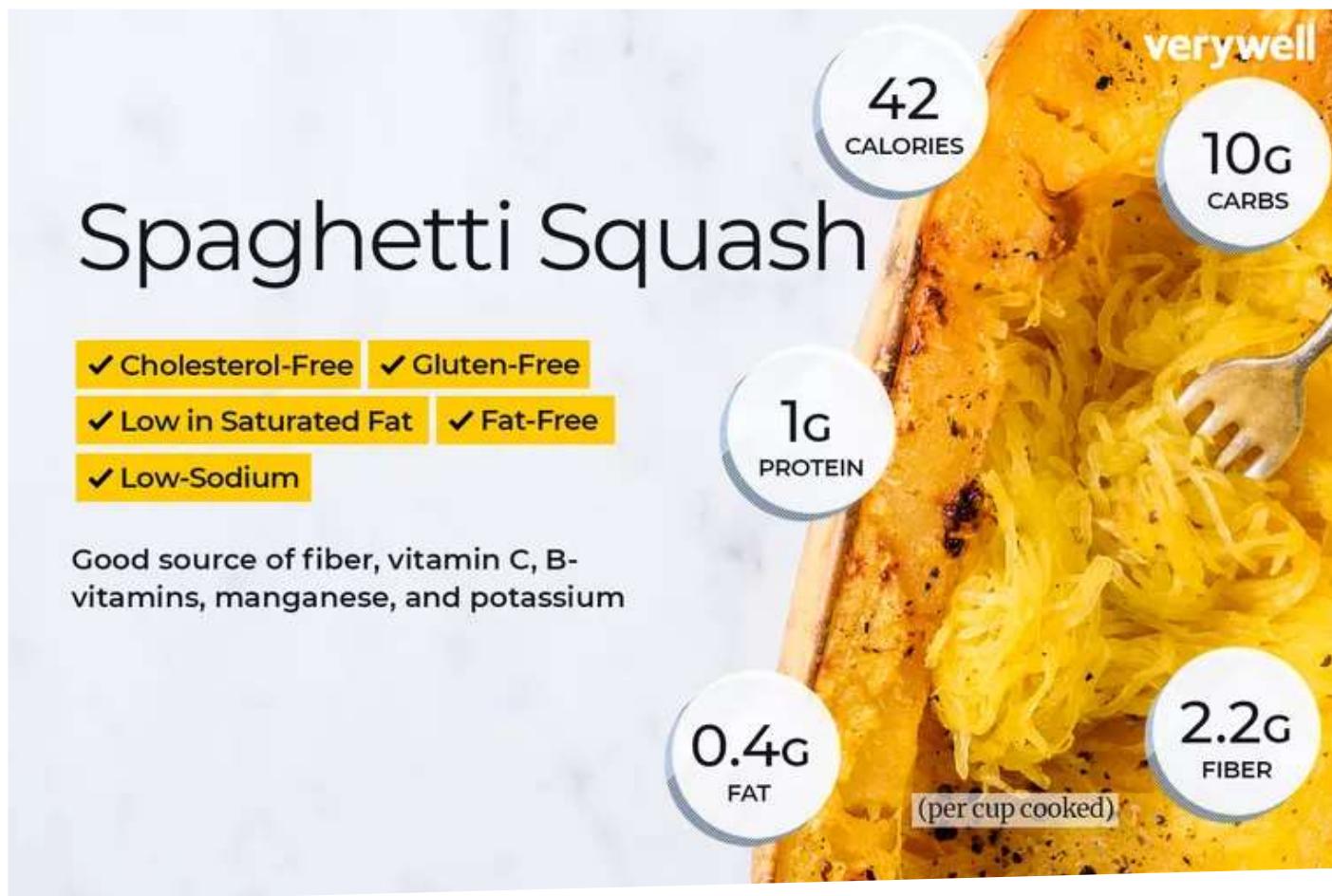




NUTRITION FACTS » FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

# Spaghetti Squash Nutrition Facts and Health Benefits

By [Barbie Cervoni MS, RD, CDCES, CDN](#) | Reviewed by [Mia Syn, MS, RDN](#) | Updated on June 30, 2020



Verywell / Alexandra Shytsman

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Spaghetti squash (*Cucurbita pep var. fastigata*) is a type of [winter squash](#) often used as a substitute for pasta. It has a mild, slightly sweet flavor that's perfect with olive oil and tomato-based sauces. When cooked, the fibrous flesh gets stringy, resembling strands of spaghetti.

If you've been researching low-carb pasta alternatives, you may be skeptical as to whether or not spaghetti squash is really able to replace spaghetti noodles. Although cooking with spaghetti squash is different than cooking Verywell Fit uses cookies to provide you with a great user experience and for our [business purposes](#).

# Spaghetti Squash Nutrition Facts

The following nutrition information is provided by the USDA for 1 cup (155g) of cooked spaghetti squash prepared without added fat.

**Calories:** 42

**Fat:** 0.4g

**Sodium:** 412mg

**Carbohydrates:** 10g

**Fiber:** 2.2g

**Sugars:** 3.9g

**Protein:** 1g

## Carbs

A cup of cooked spaghetti squash has 10 grams of carbohydrates with just over 2 grams of fiber (in comparison, a cup of butternut squash has 21.5 grams of carbs and 6.6 grams of fiber; butternut squash also has about twice as many calories as spaghetti squash). There are about 4 grams of natural sugars in spaghetti squash.

Along with other types of winter squash, spaghetti squash is a low glycemic food. <sup>[1]</sup> Spaghetti squash can help you cut down on carbohydrates in traditional pasta dishes. If you are trying to watch your carbohydrate intake and decrease your overall caloric intake, while increasing your vegetable consumption, spaghetti squash is a good choice.

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## Fats

Spaghetti squash is virtually fat-free with less than 1/4 gram per serving.

## Protein

Spaghetti squash is not a significant source of protein. Try pairing it with a dollop of [vegetarian bolognese sauce](#) to craft a balanced meal with protein.

## Vitamins and Minerals

Spaghetti squash is a good source of carotenoids, which the body converts to vitamin A. <sup>[2]</sup> It also provides vitamin C, B vitamins, and manganese.

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# Health Benefits

Spaghetti squash is a nutrient-dense food, meaning it's low in calories and rich in beneficial nutrients with a host of health benefits.

## Supports Strong Bones

Spaghetti squash has over nine minerals that contribute to bone health, the highest of which is [manganese](#).<sup>[2]</sup> The vitamins and minerals in spaghetti squash work together synergistically. It is recommended to get nutrients through food as opposed to getting them through dietary supplements.

## Controls Blood Sugar

Spaghetti squash and other vegetables from the Cucurbita family have been

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Beyond the blood sugar-related benefits associated with the bioactive substances in squash, spaghetti squash is a non-starchy vegetable that fits well into a meal plan for managing diabetes.

## Protects Eyes

The vitamin A and vitamin E in spaghetti squash are beneficial for protecting eyes from the oxidative damage that leads to age-related macular degeneration.<sup>[4]</sup> Obtaining these nutrients from food rather than from supplements provides health benefits and minimizes the toxicity risk posed by supplementation.

## Prevents Cancer

Components in spaghetti squash and other related plants, called cucurbitacins, have been shown to kill cancer cells in preliminary studies, suggesting the need for further investigation.<sup>[3]</sup> Additionally, vitamin C and vitamin A are well known for their antioxidant effects.

## Enhances Memory

The B-vitamins in spaghetti squash enable the brain to communicate memories and messages from one area to another.<sup>[5]</sup> Furthermore, uncontrolled diabetes is a risk factor for Alzheimer's disease. The impact of high blood sugar on the development of Alzheimer's has led to the disease being coined "type 3 diabetes" by some health professionals.

Keeping blood sugars under control by choosing non-starchy vegetables, like spaghetti squash, can help ward off this negative effect.<sup>[6]</sup>



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Seek emergency care if the symptoms are severe or you experience breathing difficulty, rapid heart rate, lightheadedness, widespread hives, or the swelling of the face or throat. These may be signs of a potentially life-threatening, all-body allergy known as anaphylaxis.<sup>[7]</sup> If you suspect a food allergy to spaghetti squash, see your doctor for a full evaluation.

## When It's Best

Spaghetti squash is typically harvested in early autumn but is available year-round.<sup>[8]</sup> Choose a spaghetti squash that is firm with no soft spots or blemishes. It should feel heavy for its size.

A ripe squash will sound hollow when tapped.

Avoid squashes that don't have their stems still attached. The stem helps keep out bacteria and seals in the moisture. Do not buy spaghetti squash with soft areas or a moldy stem. If anything, the skin of the squash will get firmer as it ripens.

## Storage and Food Safety

Spaghetti squash should be stored in a cool, dry place. Left whole and uncooked, spaghetti squash can remain in storage at 55–60 degrees Fahrenheit for up to 3 months.<sup>[9]</sup> Once cooked, refrigerate the leftovers in an airtight container and consume within three to five days. You can also freeze cooked spaghetti squash dishes for up to a year.

## How to Prepare

Spaghetti squash is harder to cut than pumpkin or butternut squash. To

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Instead of trying to stab the squash (and possibly slipping), place your kitchen knife lengthwise on the squash, and tap the back of the knife with a hammer until the blade sinks in. Keep tapping until the tip of the knife is firmly embedded and won't slip out.

Next, grasping the knife handle with one hand and the stem firmly the other, press down until the knife passes through the bud end. If it doesn't go through completely, turn the squash over and start from the other side.

To make cutting easier, you can also rinse the squash first and poke a few holes in it. Let it sit in a hot, 350-degree oven in a roasting pan for 1–2 hours. After it cools, it will be much easier to slice.<sup>[8]</sup>

Spaghetti squash seeds are edible. Simply scoop the seeds out and roast them for a nutritious snack. Squash seeds are rich in protein and [magnesium](#). The skin of the spaghetti squash, on the other hand, is incredibly tough and should not be eaten.

Spaghetti squash must be thoroughly steamed or baked to obtain the pasta-like flesh. The easiest way to do this is to bake the squash halves face down in the oven, as follows:

**Preheat your oven 375° F.**

**Rinse the spaghetti squash** and cut it in half lengthwise (as above). Use a

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**Bake until just tender**, about 30 to 45 minutes (depending on the size of the squash). You will know that the squash is done when you can pierce the skin easily with a fork.

**Rake a fork back and forth** from stem to bud to obtain the spaghetti strands. You may need to hold the squash with a kitchen towel to keep from burning yourself.

**Roast the seeds by first washing them** under the tap. Remove the fibrous strands, and pat them lightly with a towel.

**Toss the seeds in a bowl** with a couple of teaspoons of cooking oil and a sprinkling of salt. Roast in a 300° F oven for 40 minutes until crisp and a light golden brown.

While you also could also steam the squash in a microwave, cooking it face down in the oven seems to render the best product.

Related: [How to Cook Spaghetti Squash](#)

## Recipes

### Healthy Spaghetti Squash Recipes to Try

[Tomato Basil Spaghetti Squash Recipe](#)

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