



Chili-Rubbed Butternut Squash Quesadillas with DIY Tortillas

By Dylan Sabuco

Prep Time 20 / **Cook Time** 20 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

slice: to cut into thin pieces using a sawing motion with your knife.

measure: to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

knife skills: Bear Claw (growl), Pinch, Plank, and Bridge (look out for trolls).

knead: to work dough by pushing, pulling, and folding it by hand or with a stand mixer.

sauté: to cook or brown food in a pan containing a small quantity of butter, oil, or other fat.

shape: to form food into a specific shape by hand or with a cutting tool—examples are cutting cookie dough into shapes with cookie cutters, forming bread dough into a roll or crescent shape, and rolling ground meat into a meatball.

Equipment

- ☐ Large skillet
- ☐ Cutting board + kid-safe knife
- ☐ Wooden spoon
- ☐ Measuring spoons
- ☐ Liquid measuring cup
- ☐ Dry measuring cups
- ☐ Heat-resistant spatula
- ☐ Large mixing bowls (2)

Ingredients

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☐ Squash filling:

☐ 1 small butternut squash, 2 1/2 C diced frozen butternut squash, or 1/2 15-oz can butternut squash purée

☐ 2 tsp mild chili powder (use 4 tsp mild chili powder if not using garlic powder and cumin)

☐ 1 tsp garlic powder, optional

☐ 1 tsp cumin, optional

☐ 2 tsp salt

☐ 1 tsp ground black pepper

☐ 1/2 C vegetable oil

☐ 1 C grated Monterey jack or cheddar cheese ****(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub your choice of dairy-free/nut-free cheese shreds, like Daiya brand)****

☐ DIY Tortillas:

☐ 3 C all-purpose flour ****(for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub store-bought gluten-free corn tortillas for DIY Tortillas)****

☐ 1 tsp salt

☐ 1 C water

☐ 3 T vegetable oil

Food Allergen Substitutions

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Gluten/Wheat: Substitute store-bought gluten-free corn tortillas instead of using all-purpose flour to make DIY Tortillas.

Soy: Substitute canola oil or other nut-free high-smoking point oil for vegetable oil, which usually contains soy.

Dairy: Substitute your choice of dairy-free/nut-free cheese shreds, like Daiya brand, for grated Monterey jack or cheddar cheese.

Instructions

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intro

It's quesadilla time! These tasty, tortilla-wrapped treats originated from Mexico. The beauty of quesadillas is that they can be stuffed with anything as long as you have some cheese to glue your tortillas together. Today, you will rub butternut squash with spices and fry until golden brown and soft, and use that to stuff your quesadillas to the brim with flavor. Eat and enjoy your toasty, chili-rubbed quesadillas on your next taco night.

slice + scoop

Consider your children's ages when assigning tasks for this recipe (younger kids will have difficulty cutting the squash). Start by slicing into **1 butternut squash**. (If using purée, see recipe note below.) The outer skin is tough to cut through. The easiest way to open the squash is to first cut off the root of the squash. You will reveal the orange flesh of the squash, which is much softer and easier to slice through. Cut the squash in half, lengthwise, starting from the soft, orange side of the squash. Once it is sliced in half, use a spoon to scoop out the pulp and seeds (like carving pumpkins for Halloween). Finally, slice the butternut squash into large half moon shapes (keep the skin on) and place the slices into a large bowl.

measure + toss

Measure **2 teaspoons mild chili powder, 1 teaspoon garlic powder, 1 teaspoon cumin, 2 teaspoons salt, 1 teaspoon black pepper**, and **2 teaspoon vegetable oil**, then add them to the bowl with the butternut squash. Toss the squash and spices until thoroughly coated.

sauté + reserve

Heat a large skillet over medium high heat and add **1/4 cup vegetable oil**. After a minute the pan will be hot and it is time to sauté the squash. In a single layer, add all the squash to the pan and cook for 4 minutes on each side without moving the squash around in the pan too much. If you move the food in the pan, then it won't brown well. Make sure to leave the squash alone while you work on the tortillas.

recipe note

If you are using **1/2 can butternut squash purée** instead of fresh or frozen squash, simply pour it into a bowl, season with the same amount of spices from the above step. Then, follow the instructions from here, replacing the whole squash with your purée mixture anytime it appears in the remaining steps.

measure + mix + knead

(If using corn tortillas due to a gluten allergy, skip Steps 6 to 7). Measure **3 cups flour, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 cup water**, and **3 tablespoons vegetable oil** in a large mixing bowl. Then, mix with a wooden spoon until a smooth ball of dough forms. Turn the dough out onto a clean surface and knead for 2 to 4 minutes. Go back to working on the squash and remove it from the skillet. Place it in a medium bowl to cool off slightly before you assemble the tortillas.

shape + toast

Cut the dough into at least 12 small pieces and start rolling them into balls. Flatten the balls as much as possible. Thinner tortillas will cook faster and get a better brown, toasty coating. Heat a large skillet over medium heat, and place the tortillas in the skillet in a single layer. Toast on each side for 1 minute.

sprinkle + fold

Place a tortilla on your cutting board. Measure **1 cup of grated Monterey jack or cheddar cheese** and sprinkle the tortilla with a thin layer of the cheese (about 2 tablespoons). Remove the skin from 1 piece of squash and place the soft squash (or 1 tablespoon purée) over the cheese. Repeat with remaining tortillas. Fold the tortillas in half, press down to seal as tightly as possible, and return the mini quesadillas to the skillet. Toast for 1 minute on each side to melt the cheese.

serve

It's time to eat these tasty 100 percent handmade quesadillas! Serve them while they are still warm. "Buen provecho" or "Enjoy" in Spanish!

Featured Ingredient: Butternut Squash!

Hi! I'm Butternut Squash!

"I've got a long neck with a rather bulbous end—like a bell or bottle! I'm related to the pumpkin, and in Australia, they call me a butternut pumpkin!"

History & Etymology

Squash are one of the oldest known crops—10,000 years by some estimates of sites in Mexico. All squash is native to North America, but the butternut variety didn't exist until the 1940s, when Charles Leggett, a Massachusetts man, crossed a pumpkin with a gooseneck squash.

"Squash" comes from the mid-17th century Narragansett word "askutasquash"), which means "eaten raw or uncooked." This squash is called "butternut" because of its nutty flavor.

Anatomy

Botanically, butternut squash is a fruit and belongs to the Cucurbitaceae family that includes cucumbers, honeydew melons, pumpkins, watermelons, and zucchini. However, as food, it is used as a vegetable. Butternut squash is a type of winter squash that grows on a vine, and when ready for harvest, they have a hard tan skin that you can't pierce with a fingernail, yellow-orange flesh that gets more orange when ripe, and a hollow seed cavity with edible seeds.

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

Winter squash are cured for the best flavor, as their natural sugars have a chance to concentrate. They are picked with part of their stem left on, then left in the sun, and kept dry for about 7 to 14 days. (Although, they can also be cured indoors.) Their skin hardens as they sit, allowing them to last longer in storage. Butternut squash is seasonal, and in the US, the best time to buy ripe local squash is September through October.

Look for butternut squash with a solid beige color without deep cuts or bruises. A little surface scratching and marks from where it sat on the ground are acceptable. Select one that feels heavy for its size and leave any with brown spots or punctures, as bacteria and mold could develop.

Store butternut squash in a cool, dark place in your kitchen, and it will keep for 2 to 3 months—it does not need to be refrigerated.

Its unique flavor can be used in both savory and sweet dishes. You can cook it in various ways: roasted, grilled, steamed, or puréed. It is a side dish or an ingredient for soup, pasta, dips, salads, desserts, and more.

In South Africa, cooks use butternut squash to make soup, or they grill it whole, seasoned with cinnamon and nutmeg or stuffed with spinach and feta and wrapped in foil.

The skin is edible if softened during roasting. Roasted butternut squash seeds can be eaten as a nutritious snack, just like pumpkin seeds, or their oil can be pressed for cooking or salad dressings.

Nutrition

Butternut squash is a good source of soluble fiber, beta-carotene, vitamins A, C, and E, manganese, magnesium, and potassium. It has more vitamin A than that of a pumpkin. It is high in water content and very low in calories: one serving is just 45 calories!

Butternut squash has natural antioxidants and anti-inflammatory properties and is good for your skin and eyesight.