

Squash Dissection

What is the challenge? Explore all parts of a squash from the inside out.

What you need:

- A whole squash
 - Pumpkins work well, but certain types of squash (such as acorn or butternut) are fine.
- Sharp knife
- Bowl
- Paper towels or kitchen towel



What to do:

- Observe the outside of your squash. What does it look like? Use more than your eyes to explore – how does it feel? Smell? Sound when tapped?
- Carefully cut the top open and look inside. What do you notice?
- Time to roll up your sleeves and get messy! Using your hands, scoop out the inside parts of your squash and put them in your bowl. See if you can get all of the “guts” out.
- Explore and compare the different parts of your squash. What are all the different parts?

Notes for adults:

- Be safe. For younger learners, consider cutting the squash before exploring so the learner does not have to use a knife. For older learners, adult supervision is advised while using sharp objects.
- Discuss the different squash features as learners move through their dissection.
- Ask guided questions like, “What does the squash feel like?”



What's going on?

A squash is made of many different parts. Some of these include:

- **Stem:** Often called the handle, it's green when still growing and turns brown once it's ripe. The stem provides nutrients to the squash from the vine the squash is attached to.
- **Skin:** The thin, sometimes shiny outer layer of the squash. The skin keeps insects and diseases out of the fruit and is not edible.
- **Fibrous strands:** The stringy, gooey inside part of the squash.
- **Seeds:** The seeds of the squash are found attached to the fibrous strands. Each squash has hundreds of seeds.

Take it further:

- Perform a dissection on other fruits and vegetables. How are they similar to a squash? How are they different?

