

Crock Pot Spaghetti Squash



I was walking through the produce aisle this week and excited to see all of the fall produce slowly emerging as the weather starts to cool and the crock pot starts to heat. With squash of every size and variety piled up like presents under a tree, I started loading my cart

with butternut, acorn, and spaghetti squash. But the tipping tower of treasures presents a second issue— how do you prepare and cook these ridiculous looking vegetables? As with most foods that I don't want to fret about, I make them in my crock pot!

If you haven't ever experienced spaghetti squash, you are about to be delighted. I'm pretty sure it's the best diet food ever since it's low in calorie, gluten-free, dairy-free, paleo-friendly, vegan, vegetarian, nut-free, guilt-free, and packed with nutrients and flavor. But what intrigues me most about this cavern of goodness is the bizarre pasta like consistency of the meaty threads.

Here's the prep: waaaaaash the squaaaaaash. I love that you just sounded that out. Seriously though, this thing is going to sit in its entirety in your crock pot all day, let's not harbor fugitives like bugs or germs. Then take a sharp knife and stab the squash 5-6 times so that the heat and moisture can seep in and out to cook the flesh. Yes, it's a vegetable, but I think you can use words like meaty and flesh to describe never-living creatures, too.

Put the 4 lb squash and 2 cups of water in your crock pot for 6 hours on low. When it's done, the squash will deflate a bit

and be awkward to lift out. Watch out– it's HOT and full of juices. Let it cool a bit before you handle it. You will need to cut the spaghetti squash in half and scoop out the seeds inside (Throw the seeds away. This is not a pumpkin.)

Use a fork to shred the cooked pasta-like fresh from inside the squash. Once you have scraped it out, throw out the skins. Much like pasta, this is now a wonderful blank slate to begin preparing a delicious dish! Here are a couple ideas to choose from as far as fun flavors to add into your spaghetti squash:

- Add 1 tablespoon butter, 1 teaspoon minced garlic and 1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese.
- Add 1 cup alfredo sauce, 1 lb. browned ground beef and a can of stewed mushrooms. Oh look- beef stroganoff!
- Top it with [crock pot chicken cacciatore](#) for a low-fat, low-carb hearty dinner. (Yes, this requires two crock pots.)
- Add a scoop of [crock pot caramelized onions](#) and some cubed mozzarella cheese. French onion spaghetti squash!

Trying a new vegetable dish is no longer a challenge or a disappointing dinner. Enjoy your local seasonal vegetables in these new and exciting ways.