

Creamed Winter Squash

To serve 4

2½ pounds acorn, Hubbard, or butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cut into 2-inch chunks	temperature 1 tablespoon pure maple syrup (<i>see page 2</i>)
4 tablespoons butter, cut into ½- inch bits and softened at room	¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg, preferably freshly grated 1 teaspoon salt

Pour water into the lower part of a steamer to within about 1 inch of the top pan and bring to a boil. Place the squash in the top pan and set it in place. Immediately cover the pan and steam over high heat for 30 minutes, or until the squash can be easily pierced with a fork.

(Lacking a steamer, you can easily improvise one by using a large pot equipped with a tightly fitting cover and a collapsible steaming basket on legs or a standing colander. Pour water into the pot to within about 1 inch of the perforated container and bring it to a boil. Place the squash in the basket or colander, set it in place and cover the pot. Steam over high heat for about 30 minutes, or until the squash is soft.)

Purée the squash through a food mill set over a bowl, or mash it smooth with a table fork. (There should be about 3 cups of purée.) Transfer the purée to a heavy 8- to 10-inch skillet and, stirring almost constantly, cook over moderate heat until the purée is dry. Stir in the butter, maple syrup, nutmeg and salt and taste for seasoning. Serve the creamed squash at once from a heated bowl, sprinkled with a little more nutmeg.