

COMMENT

Strange fact about squash

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What's Cookin'

As I write this article, my hands are coated in what seems to be a waxy yellowish substance, the skin seems tight and they are cracking. Yes, I've been chopping butternut squash. Such an unattractive feature of such a lovely fruit. And I never seem to remember to look up why this happens— but I remembered today!

Once again, when in search of the absolute truth, I turned to the Internet (*insert sarcasm here*). Sometimes I wonder what future generations will think when they look back at our current method of learning— will they think we are crazy because we believe the answers garnered from a source that anyone can post information to, whether it is true or not?

Anyway, back to the subject at hand— what is this stuff all over my hands? Several websites reported that butternut squash causes some kind of contact dermatitis and that is actually my skin peeling off. I think not.

However, then I came across a site with

what I believe to be a more plausible answer. When you cut into a butternut squash (also true for other types of squash and similar plants such as zucchini) you'll notice that the fruit secretes a clear liquid (I always wondered what that was). Well this clear liquid is apparently the defense mechanism used by the plant when it is damaged. It secretes this liquid and the wound is sealed up and can scab over, but still survive. So, when this liquid gets on your hands, it causes your hands to harden and seal over.

The solution is to wear gloves. But this same website also claims that the effect is lessened when the squash is more mature— it is worse when the fruit is still slightly unripe.

You can ripen your squash after picking by leaving in a sunny spot in the house (keep turning so all sides get exposed to the sun).

Have fun and keep cooking!

Baked Eggs

INGREDIENTS

Serves one

- 1 slice white or whole wheat bread, crusts removed
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp butter
- 1 tsp maple syrup

METHOD

1. Lightly flatten the bread and place in



a muffin tin.

2. Butter the bread, then drizzle the maple syrup on the bread.

3. Break the egg into the bread cup and bake in a preheated 350 degree F. oven for approximately 12-15 minutes, depending on

if you like the yolk hard or soft.

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