

## Eat Candy as One of Your Vegetables

October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017

Cathy Greer Mazanec, MS, RDN, LDN

### The North Georgia Candy Roaster

I'm a North Carolina native, born and raised. So, it was quite a surprise at a recent trip to the farmers market when I came across this odd looking, large pink banana-shaped pumpkin-squash that I had never laid eyes on. When I asked what it was the farmer said "It's a North Georgia Candy Roaster". What?!?

#### History of the North Georgia Candy Roaster Squash

So, I bought one and proceeded to do a little research. Turns out, this unique pumpkiny squash thingy has a really, cool history. I found that the North Georgia Candy Roaster is rare and was originally bred by the Cherokee Indians in the Southern Appalachians of North Carolina and Georgia in the 1800s. The seeds are heirloom.



It is a winter squash variety, (*curcubita maxima*) displaying hues of pink, tan, orange, green, gray and blue. The North Georgia Candy Roaster can grow up to 15 pounds (6 - 10 pounds is common) and 18 inches and is a variant of the Pink Banana Squash. (It has a larger relative, the Georgia Candy Roaster, which is a jumbo squash growing up to 60+ pounds).

#### Farming History

Historically, the Candy Roaster was farmed using the "three sisters" farming technique with corn, legumes and squash. In the three sisters farming technique, the corn is planted first then vining beans or peas are planted so their vines will climb the corn stalks while adding nitrogen to the soil. Then pumpkins and candy roasters are planted at the base of the corn stalks because their large leaves help control weeds. Brilliant!

The North Georgia Candy Roaster is harvested in the fall like other winter squash and can be stored for up to 5 months.

#### Flavor Profile

The North Georgia Candy Roaster is sweet and very versatile and its sweet flavor peaks as it is stored over the winter. It can be used in any recipe that calls for butternut squash, sweet potatoes or pumpkin. It's used in pies, soups, bisques, butters and baked goods. Because it has a natural sweetness, additional sugar is not needed or can be significantly reduced in recipes.

## Cooking Methods

The Candy Roaster is easy to prepare. It can be baked, roasted, boiled or mashed.

## Nutrition Information

I could not find nutrition information for the NG Candy Roaster in my nutrition analysis software but its deep orange flesh and flavor profile compare to butternut squash which has the following nutrition breakdown:

Serving size: 1 cup raw cubes  
Calories: 63  
Protein: 1 gm  
Carbohydrates: 16 gm  
Fiber: 3 gm  
Fat: 0 gm  
Vitamin A: 300% DV  
Vitamin C: 50% DV

## 6 Reasons to Like the North Georgia Candy Roaster

- Heirloom crop
- Easy to cook – bake, boil, grill, roast
- Cooked flesh freezes well
- Sweet, subtle flavor
- Can be roasted and eaten as a side dish or used in pies, butters, purees, baked goods, soups, bisques
- Can be stored up to 5 months and flavor improves with age

For more information and recipes using the North Georgia Candy Roaster, click [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

And, check out North Georgia Candy Roaster recipes on Pinterest [here](#).

To order seeds to plant your own, visit [johnnyseeds.com](http://johnnyseeds.com).