



Summer Squash

Illinois-grown summer squash is available July through September.

Summer Squash Is Good for You

Summer squash is ...

- very low in calories

Many squash varieties provide ...

- vitamin C
- potassium
- beta carotene, if the skin is eaten.

How to Buy Summer Squash

Look for small to medium-sized squash, no bigger than 8 inches long (or 4 inches across for patty pan squash.) Baby summer squash just 1 to 2 inches long, are tender and sweet. Very large, overgrown squash may be coarse or stringy inside and have large seeds.

Choose squash that is firm and feels heavy for its size; otherwise, it may be dry and cotton-like inside. The skin should be even colored and slightly shiny. Check for nicks, bruises, or soft spots. The squash should look plump, not shriveled, and the stem end fresh and green.

One pound of summer squash equals...

- 2 medium-sized squash
- 3½ cups raw slices
- 3 cups raw, grated squash
- 1½ cups cooked squash.

How to Store Summer Squash

Handle gently. The skin is thin and fragile. Stored in the refrigerator in a plastic bag, summer squash will keep up to a week.

Types of Summer Squash

Zucchini is the most popular summer squash, but other varieties are available.



Yellow crookneck or straightneck has yellow skin and flesh. The skin may be smooth or bumpy.

Patty pan is greenish-white or yellow in color. The inside is white and juicy.



How to Use Summer Squash

Before using, wash squash well and trim the ends. Summer squash does not need to be peeled or seeded unless it is oversized and has a thick skin or large seeds.

Squash has a mild flavor. Experiment with sweet spices like allspice, cinnamon, cloves, ginger, and nutmeg, or try pungent flavors like basil, mustard and Rosemary.

A summer squash can be used in different ways depending on how it is cut. Thin strips work well for a stir-fry or a raw vegetable tray. Sliced half-circles are good in soup or lasagna. Grated squash can be added to salads, slaw, spaghetti sauce or muffin and quick bread batters. Stuffed squash makes a nice dish for company. See next page, under "To Bake" for instructions.

This information provided by U of I Extension
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Summer Squash Recipes

To Blanch or Boil . . .

Wash and cut squash into desired shape. Bring about an inch of water (or enough to cover the squash) to a boil. Add the squash and bring back to a boil. Cook, uncovered, 1 to 3 minutes, depending on how you plan to use the squash.

To Barbecue . . .

Wash squash and halve or cut into chunks. Brush the pieces with oil and place on grill. You can skewer pieces and add other vegetables for a kebab, if you like. Cook about 3 minutes on the hottest part of the grill, then turn and move to a spot away from the direct heat to finish cooking, about 8 to 10 more minutes, until tender.

To Microwave . . .

Wash and cut 2 medium-sized squash into ¼ inch slices. Arrange in a microwave baking dish. Add 3 tablespoons of water; cover. Cook at full power 4 to 7 minutes or until tender, stirring halfway through.

Note: Baby squash can be microwaved whole by pricking with a fork first and increasing cooking time.

To Bake . . .

Wash and halve. Brush the cut surface lightly with margarine or oil and top with chopped onion, herbs, bread crumbs or Parmesan cheese. If you plan to stuff the squash instead, scoop out a little of the inside and fill with your favorite filling. Any meat, poultry, seafood or egg ingredient should be precooked. Place in a baking pan; add a few spoonfuls of water. Bake uncovered 30 to 35 minutes at 350°F.

To Stir-Fry . . .

Wash and cut into desired shape. Heat 1 teaspoon oil for each cup of squash pieces. Stir-fry in hot oil 4 to 5 minutes. Keep stirring and turning the pieces so they cook quickly but don't become soggy.

To Steam . . .

Wash squash and cut into pieces that fit in your steaming basket. Bring an inch of water to a boil. Fill the steamer basket with squash and set over water. Cover and steam 3 to 5 minutes.

Note: Baby squash can be steamed whole but will require longer cooking time.

Summer Chili

Serves 8

¾ lb. lean ground beef or ground turkey
1 cup chopped onion
1 cup diced carrots
¾ cup chopped green bell pepper
2 garlic cloves, minced (or ½ tsp. garlic powder)
1 28-oz. can tomatoes (or 3½ cups fresh tomatoes, chopped)
1 16-oz. can chili or kidney beans, drained (or 2 cups, cooked from scratch)
2 cups water
1½ Tbsp. chili powder
¾ tsp. dried oregano
½ tsp. salt, if desired
2 cups diced yellow or zucchini squash

Calories: 210 per serving
Fat: 4 grams per serving

Directions:

Cook ground beef or ground turkey in a large pot over medium heat until no longer pink. Drain off fat. Add onions, carrots, green bell peppers, and garlic. Cover and cook over low heat until onion is softened, about 8 minutes.

Stir in tomatoes, beans, water, chili powder, oregano, and salt. Cook, uncovered, until chili comes to a simmer. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, 20 minutes. Stir occasionally. Add squash and simmer, uncovered, about 10 minutes longer.