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Using Storing and Preserving Summer Squash  
Michigan State University Extension Service  
N.A.  
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# SUMMER SQUASH

Michigan-grown summer squash are available July through September.

## NUTRITION INFORMATION

One-half cup raw sliced summer squash has:

- 11 Calories
- 0 grams fat
- 1 gram fiber.

Summer squash is a good source of vitamin C. A food is a good source of a nutrient if a serving provides 10 to 19 percent of the Daily Value for that nutrient.

Nutrient information is based on the USDA nutrient composition database.

## HOW TO BUY



- Choose summer squash that are no longer than 8 inches (or 4 inches across for pattypan squash). Baby summer squash, 1 to 2 inches long, are tender and sweet. Very large squash may be coarse or stringy inside.
- Summer squash should be firm and feels heavy for its size.
- Skin should be even-colored and slightly shiny. Squash should not be shriveled or have nicks, bruises or soft spots.
- Handle summer squash gently — the skin is thin and fragile.

## SQUASH TYPES

**Zucchini**, the most popular summer squash, is dark green on the outside with pale flesh.



**Yellow crookneck and straight neck** squash has yellow skin and flesh. The skin might be smooth or bumpy.

**Pattypan** squash is greenish-white or yellow. The inside is white and juicy.



## YIELD

One pound equals about:

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

1 to 1½ pounds equals one pint frozen summer squash.

## HOW TO STORE

Store summer squash in the refrigerator in a plastic bag. It will keep up to a week.

## FOOD SAFETY TIPS

- Keep summer squash away from raw meat so that meat juices do not contaminate it.
- Wash summer squash using cool running water before preparing or eating it.

## QUICK AND EASY SERVING TIPS

- Wash squash and trim ends. Summer squash does not have to be peeled or seeded unless it is large, has thick skin or has large seeds. Large summer squash can be used if they are peeled and the seeds are removed. They can then be grated and used in quick bread recipes.
- Add thin strips or slices of summer squash to salads or soups.
- Serve raw slices or strips with a low-fat dip.
- Use grated summer squash in spaghetti sauce or quick bread.

## HOW TO PREPARE

### To boil

Wash and slice squash. Put water in a saucepan and bring water to a boil. There should be enough water to just cover the squash. Add the squash and bring back to a boil. Cook uncovered for 2 to 4 minutes or until tender.

# SUMMER SQUASH

## To steam

Wash and slice squash. Bring about 1 inch of water to a boil in a saucepan. Put squash slices into a steamer basket. Put the steamer basket into the saucepan, cover and steam 4 to 6 minutes or until tender.

## To microwave

Wash and cut 2 medium-sized squash into even-sized slices. Put squash into a microwave-safe baking dish. Add 3 tablespoons of water to the dish. Cover. Cook on high power for 4 to 7 minutes or until tender, stirring halfway through cooking.

Baby squash can be microwaved whole by piercing them with a fork and cooking on high power until tender.

Note: Microwave cooking times are provided as a guide. Cooking times vary because of differences in microwave ovens. Check product often for desired doneness.

## To stir-fry

Wash and cut squash into thin slices or strips. Heat 1 teaspoon oil per cup of squash pieces in a wok or frying pan. Add squash pieces to hot oil. Stir and turn pieces for 4 to 5 minutes so they cook quickly and don't become soggy.

## RECIPES

### Beef and Vegetable Stir Fry

3/4 pound beef round steak, boneless (12 ounces)	dash of pepper
1 teaspoon oil	1/4 cup water
1/2 cup carrots, scrubbed and sliced	1 tablespoon soy sauce
1/2 cup onion, peeled and chopped	1 tablespoon cornstarch
2 cups zucchini, washed and cut into thin strips	1/8 teaspoon garlic powder

Trim all fat from steak. Slice steak across the grain into thin strips about 1/8 inch wide and 3 inches long. Heat oil in frying pan or wok. Add beef strips and stir-fry over high heat, turning pieces constantly, until beef is no longer red (about 3 to 5 minutes). Reduce heat. Add carrots, onion, and seasonings. Cover and cook until carrots are slightly tender, 3 to 4 minutes. Add squash; cook until vegetables are tender-crisp, 3 to 4 minutes. Mix cornstarch and water until smooth. Add slowly to beef mixture, stirring constantly. Cook until thickened and vegetables are coated with a thin glaze. Makes 4 (about 1 1/4 cup) servings.

Variation: Use 3 chicken breast halves without bone or skin (about 12 ounces raw chicken) in place of beef. Slice chicken into thin strips.

This is an official 5 A Day recipe. Official recipes of the 5 A Day program meet specific criteria developed by the Produce for Better Health Foundation in cooperation with the National Cancer Institute.

Nutritional analysis per serving: 150 Calories; 5 grams (g) fat; 45 milligrams (mg.) cholesterol; 315 mg. sodium.

### Skillet Zucchini with Chopped Tomatoes

1 teaspoon margarine  
2 small onions, peeled and chopped  
4 small (about 6 inches long) zucchini, washed and thinly sliced  
2 medium tomatoes, washed and chopped  
Dash of pepper

In a large nonstick skillet, melt margarine over medium heat. Add onions and cook, stirring until softened. Add zucchini and cook for 2 minutes. Add tomatoes and cook for another 3 to 5 minutes or until zucchini is tender-crisp. Season with pepper. Makes 4 (3/4 cup) servings.

This is an official 5 A Day recipe.

Nutritional analysis per serving: 60 Calories; 1 g. fat; 0 mg. cholesterol; 5 g. fiber; 25 mg. sodium.

## HOW TO PRESERVE



### To freeze summer squash slices

Wash and cut in 1/2-inch slices. Bring about an inch of water (or enough to cover squash) to a boil. Add the squash and cook, uncovered for 3 minutes. Remove from boiling water and cool. Put cooled squash into freezer bags, leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Seal, label, date and freeze. Use frozen summer squash within 8 to 12 months for best quality.

Do not freeze more than one quart (2 to 3 pounds) of food per cubic foot of freezer capacity per day. One cubic foot will hold 30 quarts of food.

### To freeze grated zucchini

Wash and grate. Bring 1 to 2 inches of water to a boil in a saucepan. Put a thin layer of grated zucchini in a steamer basket and place the basket over the boiling water. Cover the saucepan and keep heat high. Steam for 1 to 2 minutes until flesh of squash looks clear. Put grated zucchini into freezer containers, leaving 1/2-inch head space. Cool by placing the filled freezer bags in cold water. Seal, label, date and freeze. Use thawed grated zucchini in recipes. If watery when thawed, discard the liquid before using the zucchini.

**Canning is not recommended for summer squash.**

## INFORMATION

For more information on food, food preservation, USDA-tested and approved canning recipes, nutrition and health, see <<http://www.msue.msu.edu>>.

Information in this bulletin is based on USDA Canning Guide (September 1994), Using and Storing Summer Squash (MSUE, 1993), and So Easy to Preserve (University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, 1993).



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