

# Summer Squash

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# What's So Great about Summer Squash?

Summer squash is more than 95% water. Squash is low in calories, sodium, and fat. When eaten with the skin, summer squash is a good source of vitamin C. To get the most nutrients, eat the entire vegetable including the flesh, seeds, and skins. Squash is inexpensive and can be eaten raw or cooked.



## Selecting and Storing Summer Squash

**Summer squash is available all year but is best from May to August.**

### **Look for**

Squash that is tender and firm. Tender squash has glossy skin instead of dull. It is neither hard nor tough. Select squash that have no bruises.

### **Avoid**

Stale or over-mature squash. This squash will have a dull skin and a hard, tough surface. Squash with these qualities will also have a dry, stringy texture inside. Avoid squash with discolored or pitted areas.

### **Storage**

Place in a plastic bag and store in the crisper of the refrigerator. Summer squash will keep for up to a week in the refrigerator.





# Varieties of Squashes



The most popular summer squash is zucchini. Zucchini is only one of many kinds of summer squash. All types of summer squash are alike enough to be mixed in recipes.

## << Zucchini

The shape of a zucchini looks like a cucumber. Zucchini skin is medium to deep green, with paler green spots or stripes.

## Patty pan >>

Patty pan is also called cymling or scallop squash. This is a green-white, disk shaped squash. Its flesh is white and tender. Yellow patty pan squash (such as Sunburst) is similar but more cup-shaped. Scallopini is the name of a smaller green-scalloped version.



## << Yellow straightneck

This squash forms a cylinder that gets thinner at one end. Its skin may be bumpy like crookneck's. The flesh is lighter in color than a crookneck's.

## Yellow crookneck >>

This squash is bottleshaped with a thin, curved, swan-like neck. Yellow crookneck squash has yellow, sometimes bumpy, skin and yellow flesh.



## << Chayote

Although best known in the South and Southwest, chayote (chy-o-tay, to rhyme with coyote) is becoming popular in other parts of the U.S. Chayote is a pale green, dark green, or white pear-shaped summer squash. It is also called mirliton, vegetable pear, and christophene. Unlike other summer squash, chayote has a large seed and a thick ridged skin. This type of squash needs a longer cooking time.

## Did you know?

Squashes are gourds that belong to the same family as melons and cucumbers. Most varieties have a creamy white flesh on the inside protected by an outside rind or soft shell.



# Preparation Tips

Wash squash well and trim the ends. Summer squash does not need to be peeled or seeded.

**Salting:** Squash is mostly water. So it may make recipes watery. To avoid this, salt squash ahead of time to draw off some liquid, then use it in your recipes. Dice or cut squash into thin slices then sprinkle the surfaces with salt (1/2 teaspoon salt is enough for a pound of squash). Place the salted squash in a colander and let stand for about half an hour. Rinse the squash and pat dry.

**Sautéing:** Slices or chunks of squash can be sautéed in stock or in a mixture of stock and a little oil. Use a non-stick skillet and toss often to keep the squash from browning. Cooking time for most summer squash is three to six minutes; for chayote, six to eight minutes.

**Baking:** Place squash, whole, sliced, or halved in a baking pan. Add a few

spoonfuls of liquid (broth, vegetable or tomato juice, or water) and cover. Flavor the squash with chopped onion and garlic and herbs, or layer it with onion slices. Or top halved or sliced squash with breadcrumbs (or a mixture of breadcrumbs and grated hard cheese) and bake uncovered. Broil after baking to crisp the topping. Cooking time: 30 to 35 minutes in a 350°F oven.

**Boiling:** Use this method for larger squash: Lower whole squash into boiling water and cook until tender. Shorten baking time by removing the seeds, then boiling before baking. Cooking times: for whole squash, 10 to 15 minutes; for half a squash, five minutes.

**Microwaving:** Cut squash into 1/4 inch slices, then arrange in a microwaveable baking dish. Add 3 tablespoons of water, cover, and cook until tender. Stir the squash when halfway through. Cooking time: four to seven minutes.

**Steaming:** Summer squash can be steamed whole, sliced, or diced in a vegetable steamer. Cooking times: for whole summer squash, 10 to 12 minutes; for halves or slices, three to five minutes; for chayote halves, 35 to 40 minutes; and for slices, 18 to 22 minutes.

**Stir-frying:** The light flavor and texture of summer squash are best preserved by stir-frying alone or with other mild-flavored vegetables, such as green beans, mushrooms, or corn. Be sure to keep stirring and tossing the slices in the pan so that they cook quickly-- before they can release all their juices and turn the dish watery. Cooking time: four to five minutes.

**Freezing:** Grate or slice and freeze extra summer squash in plastic freezer bags for later use. When thawed, the frozen summer squash works well in recipes such as zucchini bread and quiche.

## Fitting Summer Squash into MyPyramid



The **GREEN** triangle of MyPyramid is the vegetable section. Summer squash varieties are considered “other vegetables” in MyPyramid. Vegetables may be raw or cooked, fresh, frozen, or canned. Age, gender, and level of physical activity determine the daily vegetable need. For a 2000-calorie diet, it is recommended having about 2 1/2 cups of vegetables daily. For more information on vegetable serving sizes go to [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov).

### Nutrition Facts Summer Squash

Serving Size 1 cup, chopped 124g (124 g)	
<b>Amount Per Serving</b>	
<b>Calories 20</b>	Calories from Fat 2
<b>% Daily Value*</b>	
<b>Total Fat 0g</b>	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat	
<b>Cholesterol 0mg</b>	0%
<b>Sodium 12mg</b>	1%
<b>Total Carbohydrate 4g</b>	1%
Dietary Fiber 1g	5%
Sugars 2g	
<b>Protein 2g</b>	
Vitamin A 5%	Vitamin C 35%
Calcium 2%	Iron 2%

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

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# Recipe Collection

## Veggie Stuffed Pita

Makes 12 servings

### INGREDIENTS

2 zucchini  
4 carrots  
2 cups broccoli  
12 ounces cheddar cheese  
1/2 teaspoon oregano  
1/4 teaspoon black pepper  
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder  
1/4 teaspoon onion powder  
2 Tablespoons vegetable oil  
12 mini-pitas

Estimated Cost: Per Recipe: \$7.21  
Per Serving: \$0.60

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Wash vegetables.
2. Remove the broccoli flowers from stems, cut the flowers into small florets and put into mixing bowl.
3. Peel carrots and cut off the ends. Grate carrots and put into mixing bowl.
4. Slice the zucchini into thin slices. Cut each slice into quarters and put into bowl.
5. Grate the cheese and put into a separate bowl.
6. Heat oil in a skillet. Put the spices in the heated oil and then add the mixture of vegetables to the pan. Stir vegetables with a wooden spoon and sauté about 5 minutes. When the vegetables are slightly tender, remove from heat.
7. Spoon vegetable mixture into the pita. Top the hot vegetables with 1 oz. grated cheese.

**Options:** Substitute green pepper, mushrooms or onions in place of listed vegetables.

## Nutrition Facts

Serving Size: 1

Serving Size (108g)		Servings Per Container	
Amount Per Serving		Calories from Fat 40	
Calories 150		% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat 4.5g</b>			7%
Saturated Fat 1.5g			8%
<b>Cholesterol 5mg</b>			2%
<b>Sodium 330mg</b>			14%
<b>Total Carbohydrate 19g</b>			6%
Dietary Fiber 2g			8%
Sugars 2g			
<b>Protein 11g</b>			
Vitamin A 30%		Vitamin C 25%	
Calcium 15%		Iron 6%	

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less Than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less Than	25g	25g
Cholesterol	Less Than	300mg	300 mg
Sodium	Less Than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:  
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

## Picadillo

Makes 6 servings

### INGREDIENTS

1 pound ground turkey  
1 onion, chopped  
5 carrots, small, diced  
2 zucchini, medium, or other squash  
2 potatoes, medium, diced  
1 teaspoon salt black pepper to taste  
1/2 teaspoon cumin  
10 1/2 ounces tomato sauce, Mexican style,  
canned 1 teaspoon cornstarch

Estimated Cost: Per Recipe: \$4.87  
Per Serving: \$0.81

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Brown ground turkey in a nonstick frying pan.
2. Add onions, carrots, squash, potatoes, salt, pepper, and cumin. Sauté for about 5 minutes.
3. Add tomato sauce and just enough water to cover. Bring to a boil, then lower heat and simmer, uncovered, until vegetables are tender.
4. Dissolve cornstarch in about 1 Tablespoon of cold water, add to mixture. Bring dish back to a boil until gravy thickens. Serve.

## Nutrition Facts

Serving Size: 1

Serving Size (304g)		Servings Per Container	
Amount Per Serving		Calories from Fat 60	
Calories 220		% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat 7g</b>			11%
Saturated Fat 2.0g			10%
<b>Cholesterol 60mg</b>			20%
<b>Sodium 760mg</b>			32%
<b>Total Carbohydrate 24g</b>			8%
Dietary Fiber 4g			16%
Sugars 6g			
<b>Protein 16g</b>			
Vitamin A 110%		Vitamin C 45%	
Calcium 6%		Iron 15%	

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less Than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less Than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less Than	300mg	300 mg
Sodium	Less Than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:  
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

## Zucchini And Tomatoes

Makes 4 servings

### INGREDIENTS

2 Tablespoons butter  
1/4 cup onion  
1 garlic clove  
1 pound zucchini  
2 tomatoes  
1/4 teaspoon salt black pepper  
1 teaspoon sugar

Estimated Cost: Per Recipe: \$1.76  
Per Serving: \$0.44

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Melt butter in a saucepan over medium heat.
2. Add onion and garlic.
3. Cook until tender, about 5 to 7 minutes.
4. Add zucchini, tomatoes and seasonings.
5. Cover pan and reduce heat. Cook until vegetables are tender, about 20 minutes.

## Nutrition Facts

Serving Size: 1

Serving Size (207g)		Servings Per Container	
Amount Per Serving		Calories from Fat 50	
Calories 100		% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat 6g</b>			9%
Saturated Fat 3.0g			15%
<b>Cholesterol 15mg</b>			5%
<b>Sodium 200mg</b>			8%
<b>Total Carbohydrate 10g</b>			3%
Dietary Fiber 2g			8%
Sugars 5g			
<b>Protein 2g</b>			
Vitamin A 20%		Vitamin C 50%	
Calcium 4%		Iron 4%	

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less Than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less Than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less Than	300mg	300 mg
Sodium	Less Than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:  
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

# Grow Your Own Summer Squash



Summer squash is a warm season plant. Summer squash grows best at temperatures between 65° and 75° F.

Plant squash in full sun in rows spaced 3 feet apart. Plant the seeds ½ inch deep and 4 to 6 inches apart. Squash can also be planted in hills. Rows should be spaced 4 to 6 feet apart, with hills 3 to 4 feet apart within the row. Place two or three seeds in each hill. Water summer squash regularly. The garden should be watered in the

morning so the foliage is dry before sunset. Water the garden so that the soil gets wet 6 inches deep. If the plant does not get enough water, the roots will not set well. The most important time for water is once the squash fruit begins to grow.

Summer squash can be picked about 55 days after planting. For the best quality, pick the squash when they have a shiny or glossy appearance. Pick daily or every other day. Harvest

crookneck and straightneck varieties when fruit is 1½ to 2 inches in around. Harvest zucchini when fruit is 7 to 8 inches long and scallop types when they are 3 to 4 inches in across. Do not leave large summer squash on the vines because this will stop the growth of more squash.

For more information, contact your local Cooperative Extension Educator in the phone book or at <http://www.extension.psu.edu/>.

## ACTIVITY ALLEY

# How Much Do You Know About Summer Squash?



**Directions:** Answer the questions below to measure your summer squash skills.

**1. This variety of summer squash requires a longer cooking time**

- a. Zucchini
- b. Patty Pan
- c. Chayote

**2. It is best to plant summer squash when temperatures are between**

- a. 65 and 75 F
- b. 85 and 90 F
- c. 40 and 50 F

**3. If a recipe calls for zucchini, you can substitute the zucchini for another variety of summer squash**

- a. True
- b. False

**4. Summer squash has a high amount of**

- a. Calories
- b. Fat
- c. Water

**5. Summer squash is best when mixed with other mild-flavored vegetables, such as green beans, mushrooms, or corn.**

- a. True
- b. False

**6. Summer squash belongs to the same plant family as**

- a. Beans
- b. Cucumbers and Melons
- c. Chocolate

### Your Score

#### 0-2 correct

Summer squash is a versatile food. It can add a great texture and flavor to many dishes. Summer squash is low in calories, fat, and sodium.

#### 3-4 correct

Good job! Summer squash can be prepared in many ways. Most of the nutrients are in the skin of the squash. Do not peel the squash before eating. Try to include summer squash as a side dish this week.

#### 5-6 correct

Excellent! Summer squash is inexpensive, healthy addition to meals. If a recipe calls for one type of summer squash, you can use another type without changing the flavor of the dish. Try using a summer squash recipe tonight!

ACTIVITY ALLEY

# Find the Summer Squash

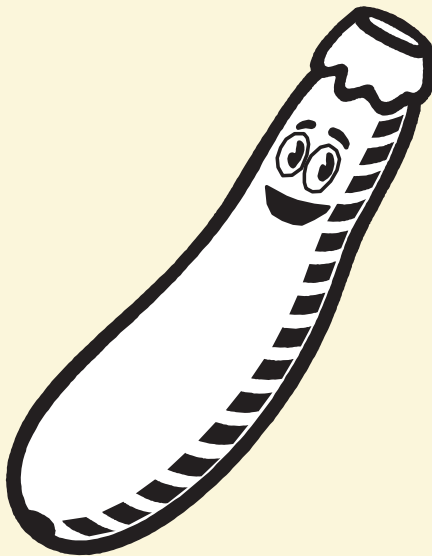
**Directions:** Find the names of the different varieties of summer squash in this word search.

Y K X Q R A U Q R V B X K E S I H P O B  
Z L Z N R F J O E E D R C Q D Y I A V I  
G C W V U U Y A M G J M E U D P F T I J  
R H J L V D K L Q E Z O N S Q X Q T M V  
E R E S L M C E H T K Z T W W W F Y L O  
W I F R N E E T Z A B K H Z U O M P F W  
F S G C E G N U Z B P D G S Z S F A V L  
Y T S A Y N K C U L B E I G K O B N T R  
M O I F U W O B J E M G A C H A Y O T E  
U P M V F M O E V P I V R C Y M L I N G  
V H Z H Y G R O O E R K T E Y W E B E C  
E E I S O Z C Q W A L A S U S L B O Y S  
L N L O V F W X A R I D W T I A T H C T  
U E H D D F O Q S Z T I O U Y I L A E U  
D I V B S P L F O N O M L Z J D L T D K  
P V O H W M L K K P N H L H G L D S C Y  
W F R E Q W E G D O V O E N O Q L X R Q  
H H X A Y Y Y I W L O M Y P T D X Q E M  
Z U C C H I N I I E G E P K Q K Z G O N  
G T G U L K S M P U E P Q L L R Z D P S

- CHAYOTE
- CHRISTOPHENE
- CYMLING
- MIRLITON
- PATTY PAN
- SCALLOP
- VEGETABLE PEAR
- YELLOW CROOKNECK
- YELLOW STRAIGHTNECK
- ZUCCHINI



**Directions:** Color "Zucchini" and draw another summer squash friend for him.





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