



Early Care & Education
at Home

Summer Squash

Did You Know



Green Zucchini



Yellow Zucchini



Costata Romanesco



Yellow Squash



Pattypan Squash



Cousa Squash



Zephyr Squash



Eight Ball Zucchini

- Zucchini is the most common variety of summer squash. Other varieties include: pattypan squash, crookneck squash, sunburst squash, yellow squash, chayote squash, and opo squash. Summer squash are harvested in the summer and have thin skins and soft flesh. Winter squash, on the other hand, are harvested later in the season and have thick rinds.
- While most squash varieties were brought from America to Europe, zucchini originated in Italy. Zucchini means "small squash" in Italian.
- Summer squash are members of the Cucurbitaceae (Cucurbit) family, which includes melons, pumpkins, cucumbers, and gourds.
- Summer squash are referred to as vegetables since they are commonly eaten this way, and due to their nutrient make-up, they are included in the vegetable food group. Botanically speaking, summer squash are the immature fruit of the plant.
- Summer squash are a good source of vitamin C and potassium, and contain manganese and vitamin B₆. Manganese plays an essential role in such functions as the formation of bones and healthy skeletons.

Garden Tips

Summer squash are not a significant part of Montana agriculture, but are widely grown in gardens throughout the state. Direct seed or transplant summer squash 10 weeks before first frost. Summer squash need full sun and plenty of room to grow. Summer squash can be planted in large containers. Good container varieties include Early Yellow Summer Crookneck and Scallopine.

Buying Tips

Choose squash that have firm, undamaged, and glossy skin. Large summer squash are often tough

and bitter, but they can be used in recipes that call for shredded squash, such as zucchini bread. Usually squash between 4-10 inches have good flavor and are not fibrous. Store summer squash in a perforated plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to one week. Wash directly before using.

Cooking

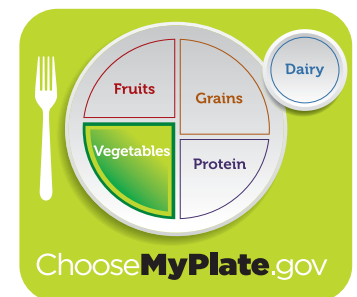
Like most vegetables, summer squash are versatile in the kitchen and can be grilled, steamed, eaten raw, and cooked in a variety of other methods. Be careful not to overcook as summer squash can become mushy. Typically, just a few minutes of cooking is sufficient. Add grated zucchini to lasagna, pasta sauces, and baked goods to add nutrients and flavor. Try making a pasta salad with cooked or raw zucchini for a tasty picnic dish or grilled zucchini slices sprinkled with parmesan cheese for an excellent side to BBQ!

Conversation Starters

- Squash sounds like square. What else sounds like squash and square?
- How many seeds do you see in your squash?
- What shape is your type of squash?
- Squash is squishy. What other foods are squishy?

Dig Deeper

For sources and photo credits along with more recipes, lessons, quick activities, resources, and guides, visit:
mtharvestofthemonth.org.



Ratatouille

Servings

6

Ingredients



1 small eggplant



2 medium summer squash



1 small onion



1 red pepper and
1 green pepper



2 medium to large cloves
of garlic



1 14.5oz can of diced
tomatoes (undrained)



1 Tbs olive oil



1 tsp salt
Pepper, pinch
1/8 tsp crushed red pepper
1/2 tsp dried basil
Dried oregano, pinch

Tools



Oven



Colander



Knife



Cutting
Board



Large
Skillet



Spatula

Directions

1. Trim and peel eggplant. Cut into 1-inch cubes. Trim zucchini and cut into 1/2-inch cubes. Trim and peel onion. Cut into 1/4-inch dice.
2. Stem, core, and seed peppers. Cut into 1/8-inch thin strips.
3. Put the eggplant in a colander. Sprinkle with 2/3rd of the salt. Let stand for 30 minutes. Rinse and drain thoroughly.
4. Heat oil in a large skillet or steam kettle. Add the onions, eggplant, and garlic, and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, 10-12 minutes.
5. Preheat convection oven to 350°F or conventional oven to 375°F.
6. Add the zucchini and peppers to the pan. Cook, stirring occasionally, until most of the liquid is evaporated, 5-10 minutes.
7. Stir in tomatoes and their juices, remaining salt, pepper, crushed red pepper, basil, and oregano. Cook for 5 minutes.
8. Put all ingredients in an oven safe baking dish. Bake for 20 minutes.



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The Montana Harvest of the Month program showcases Montana grown foods in Montana communities. This program is a collaboration between Montana Farm to School, Office of Public Instruction, Montana Team Nutrition Program, National Center for Appropriate Technology, Montana State University Extension, Gallatin Valley Farm to School, FoodCorps Montana, and Montana Department of Agriculture. More information and resources are available at: mtharvestofthemonth.org.

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