



# Summer Squash

## Growing and Harvest Information

Sow seeds as early as one week after the last spring frost, until midsummer, in moist, well-drained soil and in full sun. Add compost to create a rich soil base. Plant seeds 1 inch deep and 2-3 feet apart. Add mulch later on to help retain soil moisture. On average, squash reach maturity in 60 days.

Harvest squash before they reach full maturity, when the skin is soft and tender. When harvested early, the skin is edible. Once the plant starts producing, harvest squash daily or the plant will stop producing. To harvest, cut squash off the vine with a sharp knife or pruners, leaving at least 1 inch of stem. Handle fruit with care, and wear gloves to protect hands from prickly leafstalks and stems.

Squash blossoms are edible flowers. Harvest only the non-fruit producing male blossoms, which are much thinner, leaving a few for pollination. Harvest squash blossoms during midday, when the petals are open, leaving one inch of stem.

## Introduction

Summer squash is a warm-season crop that grows in many different varieties, such as zucchini, straightneck squash (also yellow summer squash) and crookneck squash. Summer squash differs from fall and winter squash in that it is harvested before the rind hardens and the fruit matures.

## Preparation & Storage

### Storing:

- Store unwashed squash in plastic bags in the refrigerator and wash just before use. Storage life is brief.
- Store squash blossoms by first gently rinsing in a pan of cool water, and then storing in ice water in the refrigerator until ready to use. The flowers can be stored for up to 1-2 days.

### Freezing:

- Cut the squash into halves, cubes or slices.
- Blanch the squash by boiling in water for 3 minutes and then immediately placing in an ice bath for 5 minutes.
- Drain and store in airtight freezer bags or containers, leaving 1/2 inch head space.

### Pickling:

- In a large bowl, mix 2 pounds of squash and 2 onions, both thinly sliced, and 1/4 cup of salt. Cover with cold water, stir, and let stand for 2 hours. Drain thoroughly.
- In a large saucepan, boil 2 cups white sugar, 1 tsp celery salt, 1 tsp turmeric, 2 tsp mustard seed and 3 cups cider vinegar. After boiling, pour over squash and let stand for 2 hours.
- Boil all ingredients for 5 minutes. Pack vegetables into hot jars and fill with boiling liquid, leaving 1/2 inch head space.



## Nutritional Benefits

Source	Rating
Vitamins	MODERATE
Mineral	GOOD
Fiber	GOOD

## Use By Guide

Vegetable State	Use by
Raw	10 days
Freezing	1 year
Pickled	1 year



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## Fun Fact:

In Latin America, squash are commonly made into candy.

## Prepare Summer Squash Like This:

Baked	Pureed
Boiled	Raw
Braised	Roasted
Grilled	Sautéed
Mashed	Steamed

## Try Summer Squash In:

Casseroles	Sandwiches
Gratins	Slaws
Omelets	Soups
Pastas	Stews
Salads	Stir-Fries

## Preparation

### Recipe 1: Roasted Squash

#### Ingredients

- 1 squash, sliced lengthwise into 1/8 inch slabs
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp pepper
- 3-4 sprigs of rosemary, chopped
- 3-4 sprigs of thyme, chopped

#### Directions

1. *Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Lay squash slices in a single layer on a baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil.*
2. *Season with salt, pepper, rosemary, and thyme.*
3. *Bake squash for 30 minutes, remove, flip and bake for an additional 5 minutes.*

### Recipe 2: Fried Squash Blossoms

#### Ingredients

- 1 handful of squash blossoms, fresh
- 1/2 cup cornstarch
- 1 cup fat-free milk, beer or water, chilled
- salt, to taste

#### Directions

1. *To make the batter, sift together dry ingredients, and then whisk in milk, beer, or cold water until smooth. Cover and set in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes, or up to 2 days.*
2. *Pour oil into a skillet until it is 1/2 inch deep. Heat over high heat until a small cube of bread dropped into the oil turns golden brown in seconds.*
3. *Lightly coat each blossom in the batter, then carefully slip into the hot oil. Cook until golden on all sides, about 3 minutes. Add only as many blossoms at a time as will fit comfortably in the skillet. Remove blossoms from the oil with a slotted utensil and transfer them to paper towels to drain excess oil.*
4. *Sprinkle with salt, if desired, and serve immediately.*