

# SUMMER SQUASH



## Nutrition Facts:

Summer Squash is an excellent source of manganese, copper, folate, magnesium, potassium, and fiber

- Vitamins C and A act as antioxidants, which may help to protect against hardening of blood vessels. Hardening of blood vessels is a risk factor for heart disease.
- Helps to control blood sugar levels for diabetes management.
- The seeds contain Omega 3 Fatty Acids, which may have anti-inflammatory effects on the cardiovascular system and digestive tract.
- Low calorie vegetable that provides just 36 calories in a one-cup serving.



## What is it?

The summer squash is available in several different varieties. Each variety has a unique shape, color, size and flavor. The entire squash is edible including the flesh, skin and seeds.

## Types available in the U.S.:

*Zucchini:* Cylindrical or club shaped, usually green but also available in yellow and white.

*Crookneck and Straight-neck:* Thinner at the stem end than at the blossom end, either has a curved neck or straight-neck and is usually yellow in color.

*Scallop:* Round and flat with scalloped edges. Colors include white, yellow and green.

## Fun Facts!

- The summer squash originates from Mexico and Central America. Scientists have found summer squash seeds preserved in Mexican caves that are over 10,000 years old.
- Summer squash is related to pumpkins, cucumbers and melons. They grow on a bush-type plant, unlike the winter squash, which grows on a vine.
- Summer squash is a versatile vegetable that can be grilled, boiled, sautéed, steamed, or used in a stir-fry. Steaming summer squash is the best way to retain all of the nutrients. Make sure to eat it with the rind still on because this is where most of the nutrients are.



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## HOW TO:

**CHOOSE:** When purchasing summer squash make sure the skin is tender. The rind should also be smooth and unblemished.

**STORE:** Summer squash should be handled with care as the flesh is soft and damage will cause it to spoil faster. Keep squash unwashed, inside the refrigerator. It will keep up to 7 days. Summer squash can be frozen but it creates a softer flesh. Frozen squash is best used for baking quick breads and muffins.

# How To Prepare SUMMER SQUASH



### What does it taste like?

Summer squash has a delicate and mild flavor, which makes it the perfect side dish with grilled chicken or fish on a warm spring or summer night.

### How to prepare:

Wash summer squash under cool, running water until all signs of dirt have been removed.

Chop off both ends and discard.

Slice the squash into ¼ to ½-inch slices.

## Summer Squash, Italian Style

### Ingredients:

- 2 T vegetable oil
- 1 large summer squash (sliced)
- 1 T water
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 t fresh basil, chopped
- 6 T Parmesan cheese

### Instructions:

*Tip: Add cut up fresh tomatoes, green peppers, green beans, eggplant, onions, or other vegetables in season.*

1. Using a large, ovenproof frying pan, heat 1 Tablespoon of oil to medium high.
2. Arrange squash in pan, add water and season lightly with salt, pepper and basil.
3. Cover and cook over medium heat for 5 minutes, or until tender crisp.
4. Sprinkle with cheese and drizzle with remaining oil. Place under a preheated broiler and broil until cheese melts and browns slightly.

Prepared by Volunteers of Hopelink

References:

1. <http://www.whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=foodspice&dbid=62#historyuse>

2. <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/ssquash.cfm>

3. Scalloped Squash Image: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/suziesfarm/9788091014/>

4. Farmers' Market Image: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/azeronly/9217029942/>

5. Whole Zucchini Image: <http://mrg.bz/SecqV9>

6. Sliced Zucchini Image: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/fautografie/2540220654/>

7. Recipe: / Connecticut Food Policy Council, Farm Fresh Summer Recipes



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