



Summer Squash



Fun Facts: Some of the many kinds of summer squash are zucchini, yellow crookneck, yellow straightneck, Italian marrow, cocozelle, and patty pan (also called white scallop or scallopini). Zucchini comes from an Italian word meaning "sweetest."

Selecting Fresh Summer Squash: Zucchini squash have a cylindrical shape with a dark green rind, while straightneck squash have a cylindrical shape with a creamy yellow rind. Choose small, young, shiny, firm but tender squash with rinds or skin that can easily be broken. Look for slim, elongated squash that are up to 2 inches in diameter and up to 8 inches long. For Patty Pan types, look for gray to greenish-white ones that are up to 4 inches in diameter. Avoid squash with a hard, injured, pitted or dull rind; and ones that are large, seedy, or have stringy, spongy flesh.

Measuring Fresh Summer Squash

1 pound = 4 cups raw slices = 1 2/3 cups cooked slices = 1 1/4 cups raw grated
1/2 cup raw, sliced = about 2 ounces by weight = about 65 grams

Handling and Preserving: Handle gently. The skin is very thin and susceptible to damage. Refrigerate unwashed squash up to 5 days in a perforated plastic bag. Summer squash should not be canned, but it freezes and pickles well. **To freeze:** Wash, cut into 1/2-inch slices or cubes, and place up to 6 cups at a time in 1 gallon boiling water. Boil for 3 minutes, then drain, cool immediately for 3 minutes in cold running water with ice in it, and drain again. Pack into freezer bags and seal, or into freezer containers and leave 1/2 inch of air space before sealing. **Or**, wash and grate squash, then loosely pack 1-2 cups into freezer bags or small containers. If thawed squash is watery, drain liquid before using. **To pickle:** substitute zucchini for cucumbers in a favorite bread & butter pickles recipe.

Preparation and Serving: Rinse squash under cold running water to remove dirt. Cut off ends, bruises and decay. Do not peel. Enjoy its mild flavor fresh, grilled, baked, steamed, microwaved, boiled, pan-fried or stir-fried. Sliced summer squash cooks in about 10 minutes if boiled or pan-fried. Use as directed in a recipe.

Nutrition Facts for one serving, or 1/2 cup chopped raw crookneck or zucchini squash, not peeled: Calories about 10; Protein 1 gram; Carbohydrates about 3 grams; Fat 0 grams. Summer squash contributes vitamin C, fiber and molybdenum to the diet.

References: ESHA Food Processor; www.aboutproduce.com; www.urbanext.uiuc.edu; Food for Fifty, 11th edition, 2001, by M. Molt, Prentice Hall; www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/hort2/mf661.pdf

Prepared by Mary Meck Higgins, Ph.D., R.D., L.D., CDE, Assistant Professor, Department of Human Nutrition. June 2003.
Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service, Manhattan, Kansas.
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