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Michigan Fresh

Using, Storing and Preserving
Summer Squash

Michigan-grown summer squash are available July through September.

Prepared by:
Joyce McGarry, MSU Extension educator

Recommended varieties

Cocozelle, Crookneck, Pattypan, Straightneck, White Scallop, Zucchini.

Storage and food safety

- To store summer squash, place unwashed in plastic bags in crisper drawer of refrigerator. Wash squash just before preparation. The storage life of summer squash is brief, use within 2 to 3 days.

- To prevent cross contamination keep summer squash away from raw meat or meat juices.

- Wash hands before and after handling fresh produce.

- For best quality and nutritional value do not preserve more than your family can consume in 12 months.

Lawn or garden questions?
Visit migarden.msu.edu.
Call toll-free 1-888-678-3464.

Yield

1 pound	2 medium summer squash 3 ½ cups raw slices
	3 cups raw, grated squash 1 ½ cups cooked squash
1 to 1 ¾ pounds	1 pint frozen summer squash

How to preserve

Canning

Canning is not recommended for preserving summer squash. Squashes are low-acid vegetables. There is uncertainty in determining processing times that would destroy bacteria that cause botulism. It is best to freeze or pickle summer squashes.

Freezing

Choose young squash with tender skin. Wash and cut in ¼ inch slices. Water blanch 3 minutes.

Blanching (scalding vegetables in boiling water or steam for a short time) is a must for almost all vegetables to be frozen. It stops enzyme actions that can cause changes of flavor, color and texture. Blanching time is crucial and varies with the vegetable and size.

Cool promptly, drain and package, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal and freeze.

Grated zucchini *(for baking)*

Choose young tender zucchini. Wash and grate. Steam blanch in small quantities 1 to 2 minutes until translucent.

To steam blanch, use a pot with a tight lid and a basket that holds the food at least 3 inches above the bottom of the pot. Put 1 to 2 inches of water in the pot and bring the water to a boil. Put the vegetables in the basket in a shallow layer so that steam reaches all parts quickly. Cover the pot and keep heat high. Start counting steaming time as soon as the lid is on.

Pack in measured amounts into containers, leaving ½ inch headspace. Cool by placing the containers in cold water. Seal and freeze. If watery when thawed, discard the liquid before using the zucchini.

For more information:

Andress, Elizabeth and Judy A. Harrison. *So Easy to Preserve*. Bulletin 989, 6th Edition. Cooperative Extension University of Georgia, 2014.

References:

Andress, Elizabeth and Judy A. Harrison. *So Easy to Preserve*. Bulletin 989, 6th Edition. Cooperative Extension University of Georgia, 2014.

Watch Your Garden Grow, University of Illinois Extension. **http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies**

Find out more about Michigan Fresh at **msue.anr.msu.edu/program/info/mi_fresh**.

This bulletin replaces WO1051 Food Preservation Series – Summer Squash (Michigan State University Extension, 2006).

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