



Summer Squash!

Julie Garden-Robinson, Ph.D., R.D., L.R.D., Food and Nutrition Specialist
Paige Halsted, Dietetic Intern

Summer squash can be grown throughout the U.S. during the warm, frost-free season. Summer squash varieties include crookneck (Pic-n-Pic, Sundance), scallop (Flying Saucer, Sunburst), straightneck (Multipik, Superpik) and zucchini (Easypick Gold, Gold Rush, Green Tiger, Portofino, Spineless Beauty).

Growing and Harvesting

Sow squash seeds 4 to 6 inches apart and 1 inch deep in warm soil after the danger of frost is past. Space rows 6 feet apart. Thin the plants so they are 18 to 24 inches apart. Harvest summer squash every few days while it is small and the skin is tender.

Learn more about growing vegetables on the NDSU Extension Service horticulture website at www.ag.ndsu.edu/horticulture.

Storage

Store summer squash in the refrigerator and use within three to five days. Place unwashed squash in perforated plastic bags in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator. Rinse the squash in cool water just before preparation; use a vegetable brush if needed.

Nutrition

One-half cup of raw summer squash with no added salt or seasonings has 10 calories, 0 grams (g) fat, 1 g protein, 1 g fiber and 2 g carbohydrate. Summer squash provides vitamin A, vitamin C, potassium, and other vitamins and minerals.

Preservation

Canning: Canning is not recommended for summer squash. If canned, the summer squash will turn to mush during processing because of its high water content.

Freezing:

- **Sliced:** Wash the squash in cool water and trim the ends. Slice the squash into even-sized pieces and remove the seeds. Blanch in boiling water for three minutes. Cool promptly, then package into freezer-safe containers or freezer bags, leaving ½ inch head space. Label with the contents and date.
- **Grated:** Choose young, tender zucchini. Wash and grate. Steam blanch in small quantities for one to two minutes until translucent. Pack in measured amounts into containers, leaving ½ inch head space. Cool by placing the packed containers or bags in cold water. Dry package and freeze. *Note: Thaw packages in the refrigerator. If the zucchini is watery, discard the liquid before adding it to your recipes.

Learn more about growing vegetables on the NDSU Extension Service horticulture website at www.ag.ndsu.edu/horticulture.

Drying: Wash the summer squash and slice ¼ inch thick. Spread evenly onto dehydrator trays and dehydrate at 115 F for six to 12 hours or until crisp. Let cool and transfer to an airtight container as soon as possible.



Recipes

Key to abbreviations

c. = cup

tsp. = teaspoon

Tbsp. = tablespoon

oz. = ounce

lb. = pound

g = gram

mg = milligram

Taco Summer Squash Boats

- 6 medium summer squash, cut in half lengthwise
- ½ c. salsa
- 1 lb. ground turkey
- 1 packet taco seasoning
- ½ small onion, chopped fine
- ½ c. bell pepper, chopped fine
- 1 (4-oz.) can tomato sauce
- ¼ c. water
- ½ c. shredded cheese
- ¼ c. cilantro



Preheat oven to 350 F. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Place the squash in the boiling water for two minutes, then place on a paper towel to drain. Using a spoon, remove the seeds and discard. Scrape out the flesh of the squash, reserving 1 cup for this recipe and using the rest in other recipes or freezing it as described. Spoon ¼ cup salsa into the bottom of a large baking dish and arrange squash face up. Set aside. Brown turkey in a large skillet until no longer pink. Add taco seasoning, onion, pepper, cilantro, reserved squash, tomato sauce and water and stir to combine. Cover and simmer 20 minutes. Fill each squash boat with the turkey mixture, then top with cheese. Cover with foil and bake 25 to 30 minutes or until squash is fork tender and cheese is melted. Garnish and serve with salsa.

Makes 12 servings. Each serving has 100 calories, 4.5 g fat, 10 g protein, 6 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber and 230 mg sodium.

Summer Squash Salad

- ¼ c. pine nuts (or slivered almonds or sunflower seeds)
- 2 lb. zucchini and yellow squash
- Salt to taste
- 1 c. feta cheese
- 3 Tbsp. olive oil



Use a vegetable peeler to shave the squashes into paper-thin ribbons, starting on one side and making quarter turns until you reach the seedy core. Spread the ribbons on a cutting board and sprinkle with salt. In a small skillet over medium-low heat, toast the nuts until they are turning golden and fragrant, stirring frequently. Place squash in a serving bowl (if you are not serving the salad immediately, refrigerate the squash.) Toss the squash with the feta, olive oil and nuts. Serve immediately.

Makes 10 servings. Each serving has 110 calories, 10 g fat, 4 g protein, 4 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber and 140 mg sodium.

The NDSU Extension Service does not endorse commercial products or companies even though reference may be made to tradenames, trademarks or service names. NDSU encourages you to use and share this content, but please do so under the conditions of our Creative Commons license. You may copy, distribute, transmit and adapt this work as long as you give full attribution, don't use the work for commercial purposes and share your resulting work similarly. For more information, visit www.ag.ndsu.edu/agcomm/creative-commons.

For more information on this and other topics, see www.ag.ndsu.edu

County commissions, North Dakota State University and U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating. NDSU does not discriminate in its programs and activities on the basis of age, color, gender expression/identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, participation in lawful off-campus activity, physical or mental disability, pregnancy, public assistance status, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, spousal relationship to current employee, or veteran status, as applicable. Direct inquiries to Vice Provost for Title IX/ADA Coordinator, Old Main 201, NDSU Main Campus, 701-231-7708, ndsu.eoaa@ndsu.edu. This publication will be made available in alternative formats for people with disabilities upon request, 701-231-7881.

Zucchini Bread

- 3¼ c. all-purpose flour
- 1½ tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. ground nutmeg
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 3 c. sugar
- 1 c. vegetable oil
- 4 eggs, beaten
- ⅓ c. water
- 2 c. grated zucchini
- 1 tsp. lemon juice
- 1 c. chopped pecans (optional)



Preheat oven to 350 F. In a large bowl, combine flour, salt, nutmeg, baking soda, cinnamon and sugar. In a separate bowl, combine oil, eggs, water, zucchini and lemon juice. Mix wet ingredients into dry and add nuts. Bake in two standard loaf pans, sprayed with nonstick spray, for one hour.

Makes two loaves of bread (24 servings). With nuts, each serving has 270 calories, 12 g fat, 3 g protein, 38 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber and 260 mg sodium.

Baked Summer Squash

- 2 lb. summer squash (zucchini, yellow squash)
- ¼ c. olive oil
- ¼ c. grated Parmesan cheese
- ¼ c. bread crumbs
- Salt and pepper to taste



Preheat the oven to 350 F. Remove the stem ends and slice the squash cross-wise in ¼-inch-thick rounds. Toss with the olive oil. In a small bowl, combine the bread crumbs, Parmesan, salt and pepper. Arrange the squash rounds in a 9- by 12-inch rectangular baking dish or 10-inch pie plate. Sprinkle the bread crumb mixture over the squash. Cover the baking dish with foil and bake in the oven for 30 minutes. Remove foil and bake another five minutes until the top is bubbling and crispy.

Makes 12 servings. Each serving has 80 calories, 6 g fat, 3 g protein, 5 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber and 85 mg sodium.