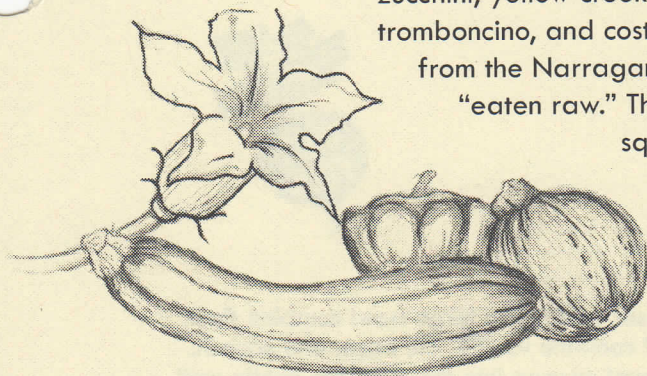


# SUMMER SQUASH



**SUMMER SQUASH** come in many varieties such as zucchini, yellow crookneck and straightneck, pattypan, tromboncino, and costata romanesco. The word squash comes from the Narragansett word askootasquash, which means "eaten raw." Though they are closely related to winter squash, summer squash have thinner more

delicate skin and softer seeds. They are loving vegetables that grow on long vines and require about 15 feet of soil. Once they begin blooming they grow very fast and must be harvested frequently to make sure that the other fruit on the vine can be nourished by the plant. You can expect summer squash in the Northeast from July through September.



## STORAGE

- ◆ Summer Squash will last about **one week** in the refrigerator drawer. Store it loose or in an open plastic bag.
- ◆ Once they are cut, bruised, or damaged the squash will not last long so **don't plan on storing an open squash for more than one day.**
- ◆ To **freeze** summer squash, rinse and cut into bite size pieces and steam until it is tender. Drain it and store in an airtight container or freezer bag for a great addition to winter soups. You can also puree it before freezing.

## PREPARATION

- ◆ Rinse or wipe down the squash. There is no need to peel it.
- ◆ Summer squash can be eaten **raw or cooked**. Try grating or slicing the raw squash and adding it to **green salads** or eating **with your favorite dip**.
- ◆ Summer squash can be **steamed, sauteed, roasted, stir-fried or grilled**. Cut into halves or pieces. The larger pieces retain their texture better.
- ◆ **Steam** for 5-10 minutes or until a fork or knife can be easily inserted. Be careful not to overcook.
- ◆ When **roasting**, cut the squash into halves or 1 to 2 inch pieces, brush with olive oil and sprinkle with your favorite herbs and salt. Also try adding a twist of lemon and grated Parmesan.
- ◆ Try baking **squash stuffed** with fresh bread crumbs sauteed in garlic, herbs and Parmesan cheese.

### **Nutritional Information**

Summer squash has a very high water content and is low in calories. It is also an excellent source of vitamin A. Vitamin A is important in vision, growth and development, skin health, immune function and reproduction.

# Summer Squash Recipes

## Aunt Harriet's Zucchini (or Squash) Bread

- 3 cups flour
- 2 1/2 cups sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 3/4 cups vegetable oil
- 4 eggs beaten
- 3 cups grated squash (3 or 4 zucchinis)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease 2 large bread pans and set aside. In a large bowl combine flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt. In a separate bowl combine vanilla, oil, eggs, and squash. Create a well in the middle of the dry ingredients and pour the wet mixture into the well. Stir lightly until all of the ingredients are mixed. Do not over mix. Pour into pans and place in oven for 1 hour or until you insert a fork into the center and it comes out clean.

Recipe contributed by Abby Bell, Just Food Intern, 2003.



## Squash "Pizza"

- 6 or more medium crookneck or zucchini squash
- 4 fresh tomatoes or 2 cans stewed
- 1 cup chopped mushrooms
- 1 onion sliced
- 1 or 2 bell peppers sliced
- Leaves from 4 fresh thyme sprigs or 1/2 teaspoon dried
- 1/4 cup fresh basil leaves or 1 teaspoon dried
- 1 1/2 cups grated cheddar or jack cheese
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Slice squash into strips or 1/2 inch rounds. In a baking dish layer half the squash, then half the mushrooms, half the onion, half the peppers, half the tomatoes and half the basil. Repeat. Sprinkle the top with thyme and cheese. Bake for 20 to 30 minutes or until cheese is browned and the squash is tender.

Recipe adapted from Recipes from America's Small Farms by Joanne Lamb Hayes and Lori Stein, Villard Books, 2003.



## Creamed Squash Soup

- 1 to 2 tablespoons butter or olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 pound yellow squash (about 6 small) cut into 1/4 inch or rounds small cubes
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme or 2 teaspoons fresh leaves minced
- 1/2 teaspoon sage
- 1/2 teaspoon dried basil or 2 tablespoons fresh leaves minced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon white flour
- 1/2 cup dry white wine (optional)
- 2 cups milk

In a soup pot, on medium flame heat butter or oil. Add onions, sauté until translucent. Add garlic cook 1 minute more. Add squash herbs and salt. Cover and cook for 8-10 minutes. While stirring, sprinkle in flour. Continue to cook and stir 4-5 minutes. Reduce heat, stir in wine, cover and simmer for 10-15 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool about 10 minutes. When cool, transfer to a blender or food processor. Add milk and puree until smooth. Return soup to pot and season to taste. Heat before serving. Makes 4-6 servings.

Recipe adapted from From Asparagus to Zucchini, Madison Area CSA Coalition, copyright 1996 by MACSAC.

