

## AUGUST: SUMMER SQUASH

**Squash** are fleshy vegetables protected by a hard rind that is rich in beta-carotene, vitamin C, and folate. **Squash** are divided into two main groups – **summer** and winter **squash**. Luckily, both **summer** and winter **squash** are available year round. **Summer squash** is harvested before it matures completely and has a tender shell with light colored flesh and a rind that should be eaten to gain the full nutritional benefit of this vegetable. There are several types of **summer squash**, including **yellow summer squash**, **cucumbers**, and **zucchini**, which is the most popular type of **summer squash** purchased in the United States.

**Summer squash** can be grilled, steamed, boiled, sautéed, fried, or used in stir fries. They mix particularly well with onions and tomatoes. Try them when small/young as raw appetizers!

**CHECK OUT THE VARIETIES OF HEALTHY SUMMER SQUASH DESCRIBED BELOW!**

	<p>Usually, zucchini are green but also may be yellow or dark green with pale green stripes. Even though you can find classic green zucchini all year long, summer is peak season — when they're really at their prime. Green zucchini has soft, thin skin with firm, mild-tasting, white flesh. This variety is really versatile and can be eaten raw, as an appetizer or spiraled into a salad, or cooked either savory or sweet. The general rule with zucchini is that the darker the skin, the stronger the *vegetal* flavor.</p>
	<p>Yellow squash is found in two varieties: straight neck and crook neck, which curves at the neck as its name implies. Yellow squash has smooth to slightly bumpy, thin skin, and creamy white flesh with larger seeds than many other varieties of summer squash. When picked young, enjoy yellow squash raw, but it is enjoyed cooked as well in both sweet and savory applications. They tend to be a bit more tender than their green counterparts, so will cook faster. Because the skin and flesh of this squash is so tender, they're a perfect candidate for raw squash ribbon salads, and quick soups.</p>
	<p>Eight ball or round zucchini, have the same mild taste as classic green zucchini, with a fun, round shape. These short, fat squash are ideal for stuffing, just lop off the top, scoop out the insides and stuff it. Or, they can be used the same way you'd use classic zucchini.</p>

## Summer Squash Tips

- Add shredded **zucchini** to lean ground beef, mold into patties, and cook or grill for a healthy boost to burgers!
- It is easy to enjoy **zucchini** on the grill. Just cut **zucchini** into spears and brush with reduced fat Italian dressing and grill using direct heat until golden brown – about 10-15 minutes total, turning periodically.
- Remember squash is great to eat raw. Just cut up slices of **summer squash, zucchini, and/or cucumbers** and dip into reduced fat ranch dressing for a quick, healthy after school and/or weekend snack!
- Get your daily recommendations of vegetables by adding chopped **zucchini, yellow squash, carrots, and onions** to your tomato sauce, simmer until a bit tender, then pour over whole wheat pasta!

## Summer Squash Recipe!

### Zucchini Grinders

Makes 4 Servings

#### Ingredients

1 Tbsp. butter  
2 medium zucchini  
1 pinch red pepper flakes  
1 cup Italian diced tomatoes, drained  
4 whole wheat sandwich rolls  
Shredded or grated mozzarella cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Melt butter in a skillet. Add zucchini and stir fry until browned and slightly tender. Add Italian diced tomatoes and red pepper flakes. Stir until sauce is heated, and slightly thickened. Spoon onto sandwich roll and top with mozzarella cheese. Wrap in tin foil and bake for 15 minutes. (Adapted from: Utah State Cooperative Extension)

## Summer Squash Recipes!

### Roasted Zucchini with Fresh Thyme

Makes 4 servings

#### Ingredients

Cooking spray  
2 medium to large zucchini, halved lengthwise  
1 tablespoon garlic-flavored olive oil or regular olive oil  
Salt and ground black pepper  
1 teaspoon garlic powder  
2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme leaves

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. Coat a large baking sheet with cooking spray. Arrange zucchini halves, flesh side up, on prepared baking sheet. Drizzle olive oil over zucchini. Season the flesh with salt and black pepper. Season with garlic powder. Sprinkle thyme over top. Roast 8 to 10 minutes, until tender and golden brown. (Source: Utah State Cooperative Extension)

### Summer Garden Vegetable Medley

Makes 6 servings

#### Ingredients

3 medium zucchini (7 to 8 inches) or 5 small (4 to 5 inches) (and/or yellow squash)  
2 medium carrots  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
1 bell pepper, seeded & cut into strips  
6 trimmed, thinly sliced green onions with tops included  
2 cloves garlic, chopped (2 tsp prepared garlic)  
2 medium tomatoes, chopped (1 cup drained tomatoes)  
1 teaspoon toasted cumin seeds, ground (optional)  
1 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Wash and thinly slice squash and carrots, and set aside. Prepare all other vegetables and set aside. Heat a non-stick skillet or wok over medium heat. Add oil. When oil is very hot, add peppers, onions and garlic. Cook for 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Add zucchini, carrots, and tomatoes and continue cooking for 5 minutes. Sprinkle with ground cumin, salt and pepper, stir. Serve hot or cold. [To toast cumin seeds. Heat a heavy skillet over low heat. Add the cumin seeds and shake the skillet periodically. When their aroma begins to be noticed, after about 5 minutes, remove the skillet from the heat. Pour seeds into a mortar, allow to cool then grind. Or use a spice grinder. (Adapted from: University of IL Extension)