

Summer squash



Summer squash comes in a variety of colors and shapes. The most popular type is zucchini, which is straight and green. Yellow straightneck squash is a yellow version of zucchini, and yellow crookneck squash tapers toward the stem end and has a slightly bumpy texture. Pattypan squash is small, greenish-white, and disk-shaped.

Summer squash is available from July through early fall.

Tips

Buying—Select small- to medium-sized squash—zucchini and yellow straightneck less than 7 inches long and pattypan less than 4 inches in diameter. Avoid squash with soft spots or wrinkled skin.

Storing—Summer squash must be refrigerated. Store in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer for up to 1 week.

Cooking—Wash summer squash gently before using. Remove both ends but do not peel. Remove the seeds if the squash is large.

Summer squash contains a lot of water, so you may want to salt the squash and allow it to drain before cooking to prevent your dish from becoming mushy.

Uses

- Brush with olive oil and grill or sauté with onion, garlic, and pepper.
- Slice raw and use in salads.
- Add to soups, sauces, and stir-fries.

Zucchini pie

1 large zucchini, sliced
apple pie spices to taste
2 tbsp. flour
½ c. sugar

pastry for double pie crust

Mix zucchini with spices, flour, and sugar. Pour filling into piecrust pastry and bake for 50 minutes at 375°F.

Optional: Dot the pie filling with tabs of butter (about 1½ tbsp. per pie) before putting on the top crust.

—Sande Eldredge and son David Flood,
Twinhawks Hollow Farm, Hillsboro, WI



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Summer vegetables



Summer vegetables offer a wide variety of colors, textures, and flavors—not to mention vitamins, minerals, and fiber. If you're looking to try something new or find some inspiration for your cooking, you may enjoy experimenting with less common varieties of familiar favorites.



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☀ Beans



There are several types of edible-pod beans—snap beans (green and wax); haricots verts (a thinner, French green bean); and Italian green beans (broad, flat pods also called Romano beans). There are also purple wax beans, which turn bright green when cooked; scarlet runner beans, which resemble Romano beans but have scarlet seeds; and yard-long beans, which originated in Asia and grow up to 18 inches long. Edible-pod beans are available from mid-summer until frost.

Buying—Select beans that are brightly colored and “snap” when broken. (Haricots verts may not snap because they are so thin.) Do not buy woody, stringy, tough-skinned, or wilted beans, or those with seeds bulging through the pod. Select similar-sized beans to ensure uniform cooking time.

Storing—Unwashed beans may be stored in a plastic bag in your refrigerator’s crisper section for up to 2 weeks, but it’s best to eat them as soon as possible. They lose their flavor and nutrients as time passes.

To freeze beans for long-term storage, blanch them in boiling water for 2 minutes, then rinse in cold water, dry, and store in an airtight container.

Cooking—Wash thoroughly in cold water and snap off ¼ inch from each end. Beans cooked whole retain more nutrients, but you can also cut them into pieces. Steam or boil uncovered until beans are bright and tender but not soft (about 10–15 minutes).

Uses

- ☀ Add to soups, stews, or stir-fries.
- ☀ Toss with olive oil or marinate in a dill vinaigrette.

Sweet and hot green beans

- ½ c. sugar
- ½ c. white wine vinegar
- ¼–½ tsp. dried crushed red pepper
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 lb. fresh green beans, stalk ends trimmed, tips left on

Whisk together sugar and vinegar until sugar dissolves. Stir in red pepper and garlic. Cover and let stand 4 hours.

Bring a large pot of water to a rolling boil. Drop in trimmed green beans and cook for 1 minute. Drain immediately. Plunge beans into ice water to stop the cooking and brighten the vegetable. Drain. Place beans in bowl.

Pour vinegar mixture over beans. Toss to coat. Let stand one hour before serving.

Note: You can also use sliced carrots in place of green beans.

—Martha Davis Kipcak,
Afterglow Farm

☀ Carrots



Carrots are close relatives of celery, cilantro, dill, parsley, parsnip, and Queen Anne’s Lace, or wild carrot. They originated in middle Asia and were cultivated in Afghanistan 2000–3000 years ago. The first carrots grown were purple and pale yellow and were traditionally used to treat stomach problems and liver and kidney ailments. Orange carrots were not cultivated until the 17th century, in the Netherlands.

Carrots are available from May to October in Wisconsin.

Tips

Buying—Carrots may be sold with or without their tops—loose, in bunches, or in bags. Select carrots that are bright and firm. Avoid shriveled, soft, or cracked carrots. The ones with small cores are sweeter than those with large, woody cores. To select carrots with small cores, look for carrots with small shoulders (the top of the carrot where the leaves are attached).

Storing—To reduce water loss during storage, remove the carrot tops if they are still attached. Refrigerate in a plastic bag and use within 1–2 weeks.

Cooking—Wash with cold water and scrub with a vegetable brush before using. Eat carrots raw or cook them with a little vegetable oil to help the body absorb beta-carotene, one of the many nutrients in carrots. Avoid overcooking, as it decreases the carotene level.

Uses

- ☀ Serve fresh with dip or make carrot slaw with apples or dried fruit.
- ☀ Add to soups, sauces, or stir-fries, or puree with onions to make a creamy soup.

Moroccan carrot salad

6–8 medium carrots, peeled and cut into julienne strips (2 cups)

- 2 tsp. paprika
- ¼ tsp. cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp. cumin
- 2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1 tbsp. sugar
- 1/3 c. mild olive oil
- salt

Whisk together spices, lemon juice, and sugar. Gradually add the olive oil and season to taste with salt.

Heat medium pot of water to boiling. Salt the water, drop in the carrots, and cook until crisp-tender. Drain carrots, put them in a mixing bowl, and toss in vinaigrette while still warm. Serves 6 to 8 as part of an antipasto selection.

—Joyce Goldstein,
The Mediterranean Kitchen