



# Freezing Summer Squash



Squash is native to the New World. The early settlers found the Indians growing the vegetable and using the yellow flowers of the vine for herbs. Although squash is generally cooked, the term “askuta squash,” meaning eaten raw or uncooked, was commonly used to refer to this vegetable in early Colonial days.

Squash come in many colors, sizes, shapes and textures, but basically they are divided into two groups: soft-shell or “summer squash” and hard-shell or “winter squash.”

## *Types of Squash*

**Yellow Crookneck** - Has a curved neck, a light yellow color and smooth skin when mature. The color becomes deeper and the skin is less tender and warty as it matures.

**Yellow Straightneck** - One of the best known summer squash. It is slender, somewhat bulb-shaped, round tipped and has a straight or slightly curved neck. The skin is a pale lemon color, delicate and smooth when immature.

**Scallop (Patty-pan)** - Is disc-shaped with scalloped edges. The flesh is pale green tinged with white, tender and juicy. The squash is best when it is small (3 to 4 inches in diameter), and the skin is pale green, before turning ivory white.

**Zucchini** - Has a dark green skin and greenish-white flesh. It is long, straight and slender, and best when about 8 to 10 inches long. The flavor is mild and delicate.

## *Nutritive Value*

Summer squash are a dieter’s delight, a good source of vitamins and minerals but low in calories. A half-cup of cooked, diced squash is only about 15 calories. Yellow and green squash are better sources of vitamin A value than are the white.

## *Selection*

Summer squash are harvested when immature, tender and completely edible. (There is no waste. You eat skin, flesh and seeds.) Soft-shell squash should be fresh in appearance, firm and fairly heavy for its size. It should have small immature seeds and a glossy, tender skin free from blemishes. In selecting summer squash, you have a choice of yellow, white or green.





### ***Freezing***

The delicate, distinctive flavor of summer squash can be enjoyed year-round when garden surplus is frozen.

To freeze: Use tender young squash with small seeds. Wash thoroughly in cold water, and trim off blossom and stem ends. Cut into thin slices, about 1/4 - 1/2 inch thick. Blanch in boiling water to stop the action of enzymes. To blanch, place about a pound of prepared squash in a wire basket, metal colander or cheesecloth bag. Immerse in a large pan of rapidly boiling water. When the water returns to boiling, begin counting time and blanch 3 minutes. Remove from boiling water, drain and chill quickly in ice water or cold running water 3 to 5 minutes, or until completely cool. Drain and package in airtight, moisture-vapor-proof freezing bags or containers.

For a better frozen product, package and barely cover squash with ice water. Remove air and seal. Many homemakers prefer the texture of squash when frozen in water. Freeze at zero degrees or below. Do not try to freeze more squash than can be frozen completely in 24 hours - about 3 pounds per cubic foot of freezer space.



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