



# Using, Storing and Preserving Summer Squash



Michigan-grown summer squash are available July through September.

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## Food Safety and Storage

- Wash hands before and after handling fresh produce.
- Wash squash under cool running water using a vegetable brush. Do not use soap.
- To store summer squash, place unwashed in plastic bags in crisper drawer of refrigerator. Wash squash just before preparation. The storage life of summer squash is brief, use within 2 to 3 days.
- To prevent cross-contamination keep summer squash away from raw meat or meat juices.
- For best quality and nutritional value do not preserve more than your family can consume in 12 months.

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## Yield

1 pound	2 medium summer squash
	3½ cups raw slices
1 to 1¾ pounds	3 cups raw, grated squash
	1½ cups cooked squash
1 to 1¾ pounds	1 pint frozen summer squash

## How to Preserve

### Canning

Michigan State University Extension does not recommend canning for preserving summer squash. Squash is a low-acid vegetable. There is uncertainty in determining processing times that would destroy bacteria that cause botulism. It is best to freeze or pickle summer squashes.

### Freezing

Choose young squash with tender skin. Wash and cut in ¼-inch slices. Water blanch\* 3 minutes.

**\*Water Blanching:** Use 1 gallon of water per pound of prepared squash. Put squash in blanching basket or strainer and lower into boiling water. Place lid on pan or blancher. Return water to boil and start counting blanching time as soon as water returns to a boil. It should take only a minute to come back to a boil. If it takes much longer, too much squash has been put in the boiling water.

Cool in ice water for 3 minutes, drain and package, leaving ½-inch headspace. Seal, label, date and freeze.

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### Grated Zucchini (*for baking*)

Choose young tender zucchini, which is a variety of summer squash. Wash and grate. Steam blanch in small quantities 1 to 2 minutes until translucent.

To steam blanch, use a pot with a tight lid and a basket that holds the food at least 3 inches above the bottom of the pot. Put 1 to 2 inches of water in the pot and bring the water to a boil. Put the vegetables in the basket in a shallow layer so that steam reaches all parts quickly. Cover the pot and keep heat high. Start counting steaming time as soon as the lid is on.

Pack in measured amounts into containers, leaving ½-inch headspace. Cool by placing the containers in cold water. Seal, label, date and freeze. If watery when thawed, discard the liquid before using the zucchini.

### References:

Andress, E., & Harrison, J. A. (2014). *So easy to preserve* (Bulletin 989). (6th ed.). University of Georgia Cooperative Extension.

University of Illinois Extension. (n.d). *Growing vegetables*. <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies>

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