



A Garden-Based Learning Program for Preschoolers

# SQUASH



Squash is a vegetable that is divided into two types: summer and winter. The most common summer squashes are zucchini and yellow squash. Both zucchini and yellow squash can be eaten raw with dips or in salads. Zucchini and yellow squash can also be eaten cooked in casseroles, stir fry, breads, muffins, pasta and as a vegetable side dish.

Winter squash is eaten cooked. Acorn squash is the most well-known variety of winter squash. Winter squash can be prepared as a part of casseroles, soups and stews and baked as a side dish.

Squash is a good source of beta carotene which helps improve eye and skin health and protect against infections. Beta carotene can help in the prevention of specific types of cancer.

When purchasing squash, it should be firm, heavy for its size, and have a shiny outer skin. Do not purchase squash that has brown spots or a lot of bruising on the skin.

MyPyramid suggests that adults eat 2½ cups of vegetables a day. Children ages 3 to 5 years should eat 1½ cups of vegetables a day.

## MEALTIME IDEAS

### Yellow Squash Bread (12 servings)

- 1½ cup flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup sugar
- ⅓ cup vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1⅓ cup squash, shredded



#### Directions

Preheat oven to 350 °F. Combine ingredients in a large bowl; set aside. Combine eggs, sugar, oil and vanilla in large bowl; beat well. Stir in squash. Add dry ingredients, stirring just until moistened. Pour batter into a greased and floured loaf pan. Bake at 350 °F for 50 minutes or until wooden toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.

*Calories 100; Total fat 1.5g; Saturated fat 0g; Cholesterol 145mg; Sodium 115mg; Total Carbohydrates 19g; Dietary fiber 2g; Sugar 17g; Protein 4g*

### Pasta Primavera (6 servings)

- 2 cups broccoli florets
- 2 cups sliced carrots
- 2 cups zucchini
- 2 cups macaroni or rotini pasta
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 2 tablespoons margarine
- 2 cups skim milk
- ½ teaspoon dried basil
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 4 tablespoons parmesan cheese

#### Directions:

Steam vegetables until crisp and tender. Cook macaroni according to package directions. In a small saucepan, melt margarine. Blend in flour. Gradually stir in milk and seasoning. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until sauce thickens. Remove from heat and blend in cheese. Pour over hot vegetables. Add macaroni and mix together.

*Calories 170; Total fat 3g; Saturated fat 1g; Cholesterol 5mg; Sodium 150mg; Total Carbohydrates 28g; Dietary fiber 3g; Sugar 8g; Protein 9g*

## FOOD SAFETY TIP

Remember to wash hands before cooking. Wash all vegetables thoroughly before use. Leftovers should be covered and stored in the refrigerator.

## IN THE GARDEN

Thinking about growing summer squash? Use the following tips to help you grow summer squash for your family:



- Plant 4 seeds per hill and cover with 1 inch of soil.
- Hills should be 24 inches apart.
- Plants need full sun.
- Water frequently, but avoid overwatering to prevent rotting.
- Harvest 45 to 85 days after planting while squash is small and skin is tender.

*Garden Tabloid #1091, Mississippi State University Extension Service*

## I CAN HELP BY

- Getting the vegetables out of the refrigerator.
- Washing the vegetables.
- Measuring the ingredients.
- Adding cooled macaroni to the bowl of vegetables (with your help).
- Helping with clean up after the meal.

## BUDGET TIP FOR BUYING MORE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

**Avoid buying single servings.** Purchasing many small packages of produce that your family likes is often more expensive than buying a larger package that can be shared within the family.



# LET'S GET MOVING

Try this fun game with your preschoolers:

## BLINDMAN'S BLUFF

Materials: blindfold (hankerchief or bandana)

One player is blindfolded and called "Buff." Spin Buff around three times. The other players walk or run around Buff as Buff tries to catch them. If Buff catches someone, that person is the new Buff. Remember to play this game in a large, open, and flat area.

*Sweet, Julia E. (2001). 365 Activities for Fitness, Food, and Fun for the Whole Family. Blindman's Bluff (pp. 195). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.*



## FUN FACTS

### DID YOU KNOW?

Summer squash is harvested and eaten while the skin is still tender. Winter squash grows a thick skin, which helps it stay fresh longer

### References:

<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/month/squash.html>  
<http://oklahoma4h.okstate.edu>

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