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Squash Food Preservation Series  
Michigan State University Extension Service  
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# SQUASH

## AVAILABILITY

**Summer:** Late July to mid-October  
**Winter:** October to November

## TRIM LOSS

**Summer squash:** Approximately 5 percent from trimming ends.

**Winter squash and pumpkin:** Approximately 25 percent from seeds, membranes and peels.

## YIELD

### Summer squash

1 pound	2 cups
1-1¼ pounds	1 pint frozen
1 lug (25 pounds)	20-25 pints frozen

### Winter squash and pumpkin

1 pound	1⅓ cup, cooked
1½ pounds fresh	1 pint frozen
16 pounds	canner load of 7 quarts
10 pounds	canner load of 9 pints (2¼ pounds per quart)

## RECOMMENDED VARIETIES

**Summer squash varieties** include zucchini, crookneck, straightneck and scallop. Fordhook (zucchini) freezes well.

**Winter squash varieties** include banana, vegetable spaghetti (spaghetti), buttercup, butternut, acorn and hubbard.

## FREEZING

### Summer squash

**Slices:** Choose small, young squash with tender skin. Wash and cut in ½-inch slices. Water blanch 3 minutes. Cool promptly in cold water, drain and package, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, label and freeze.

**Grated (for baking):** Choose young, tender squash. Wash and grate. Steam blanch in small quantities 1 to 2 minutes until translucent. Pack in measured amounts into containers, leaving ½ inch headspace. Cool by placing the containers in cold water. Seal, label and freeze. If watery when thawed, discard the liquid before using the squash.

**Cubed:** Select tender squash. Wash, cut in half, remove seeds, if necessary, and cut into cubes. Steam blanch the cubes for 2 to 3 minutes. Cool in cold water. Drain well and pack the cubes in containers, or mash them or turn them through a food mill before packing. Seal, label and freeze.

### Winter squash or pumpkin

Wash, halve and remove seeds. You can leave the squash in halves or peel and cube it.

To make a purée, bake the pumpkin and winter squash halves at 350 degrees F until soft. (Steaming is also possible but will make a wetter purée). Scrape the meat out of the shells and mash thoroughly in a food mill, sieve, blender or food processor. If preparing cubes, peel and steam the cubes until soft. Leave the cubes whole or run through a food mill or processor. Pack into containers. Seal, label and freeze.

**Spaghetti squash:** Spaghetti squash freezes very well, though it is handled a bit differently from other winter squashes. Wash, slit in half lengthwise and scoop out the seeds. Place squash, cut side up, in shallow baking pans and bake at 375 degrees F for 30 minutes. Remove from the oven. Cool until the squash can be easily handled. Pull a fork lengthwise through the flesh to separate it into long strands. Pack into freezer bags, seal, label and freeze. To reheat frozen squash,

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partially thaw, then steam, stirring occasionally until tender but still firm, 8 to 15 minutes.

Freeze no more than 2 pounds of food per cubic foot of freezer capacity per day. One cubic foot will hold 7.4 gallons.

**CANNING**

**Pressure canning:** Pressure canning is the ONLY safe method for canning squash. Place jar rack, 2 inches of water and sealed jars in a canner. Fasten lid and heat canner on high heat. After exhausting a steady stream of steam for 10 minutes, add weighted gauge or close petcock to pressurize the canner. Start timing when the desired pressure is reached. When processing is complete, remove canner from heat. Air-cool canner until it is fully depressurized. Then slowly remove weighted gauge or open petcock, wait 2 more minutes, and unfasten and carefully remove canner lid.

Remove jars from canner with a jar lifter and place them on a towel or rack. DO NOT retighten screw bands. Air-cool jars 12 to 24 hours. Remove screw bands and check lid seals. If the center of the lid is indented, wash, dry, label and store jar in a clean, cool, dry, dark place.

If after 12 to 24 hours the lid is still unsealed, examine and replace jar if defective, use a new lid and a screw band, and REPROCESS as before. Dump out squash and liquid into a pan, reheat until boiling, fill hot jars with squash and liquid, leaving 1 inch headspace. Place NEW LIDS and screw bands on jars and process for the time recommended below. When jars have sealed and cooled, remove, wash and store screw bands separately.

Squash is best if consumed within a year and safe as long as lids remain vacuum sealed.

**Winter squash, cubed:** Squash should have a hard rind and stringless, mature pulp of ideal quality for cooking fresh. Small pumpkins (sugar or pie varieties) make better products than large jack-o-lantern types.

Wash, remove seeds, cut into slices 1-inch wide, and peel. Cut flesh into 1-inch cubes. Boil 2 minutes in water. CAUTION: DO NOT MASH OR PURÉE. Fill hot jars with cubes and cooking liquid, leaving 1 inch headspace. Adjust lids and process.

**Winter Squash in a Dial-Gauge Pressure Canner**

Recommended Process Times

Style of pack	Jar size	Process time	Canner pressure (pounds pressure) at altitudes of			
			0-2,000 ft.	2,001-4,000 ft.	4,001-6,000 ft.	6,001-8,000 ft.
Hot	Pints	55 min.	11 lb.	12 lb.	13 lb.	14 lb.
Hot	Quarts	90	11	12	13	14

**Winter Squash in a Weighted-Gauge Pressure Canner**

Recommended Process Times

Style of pack	Jar size	Process time	Canner pressure (pounds pressure) at altitudes of	
			0-1,000 ft.	Above 1,000 ft.
Hot	Pints	55 min.	10 lb.	15 lb.
Hot	Quarts	90	10	15

For making pies, drain jars and strain or sieve cubes.

**Pickled Bread and Butter Zucchini (about 8 to 9 pints)**

- 16 cups fresh zucchini, sliced
- 4 cups onions, thinly sliced
- ½ cup canning or pickling salt
- 4 cups white vinegar (5% acidity)
- 2 cups sugar
- 4 tablespoons mustard seed
- 2 tablespoons celery seed
- 2 teaspoons ground turmeric

Cover zucchini and onion slices with 1 inch of water and salt. Let stand 2 hours and drain thoroughly. Combine vinegar, sugar and spices. Bring to a boil and add zucchini and onions. Simmer 5 minutes and fill hot jars with mixture and pickling solution, leaving ½ inch headspace. Adjust lids and process in a boiling-water canner.

**Pickled Bread and Butter Zucchini**

Recommended Process Times in a Boiling-Water Canner

Style of pack	Jar size	Process times (in minutes) at altitudes of		
		0-1,000 ft.	1,001-6,000 ft.	6,001-8,000 ft.
Hot	Pints	10 min.	15 min.	20 min.
Hot	Quarts	10	15	20

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