



# Recipe of the Month

## SQUASH SUPREME

### Summer Squash

Squash are fleshy vegetables protected by a hard rind. They belong to the plant family that includes melons and cucumbers. The skin and rind of summer squash are rich in the nutrient beta-carotene, but the fleshy portion of this vegetable is not. To gain the full nutritional benefits of this vegetable, the skins or rinds must be eaten.

Squash has been a staple for Native Americans for more than 5000 years, and was a mainstay for early Europeans who settled in America. George Washington and Thomas Jefferson were enthusiastic squash growers. In the 19th century, merchant seamen returned from other parts of the Americas with many new varieties. This resulted in the various colors, shapes, and sizes available today.

Even though some varieties grow on vines, while others grow on bushes, squash are commonly divided into the two groups—summer and winter. Popular summer squashes include yellow crookneck, yellow straight-neck cocozelle, patty pan, and zucchini. Zucchini is the most popular summer squash purchased in the United States. Summer squash come in many different colors and shapes. The different varieties of squash can be used interchangeable in most recipes, because most squash are similar in texture and flavor.

### How to Select

Choose squash that are firm and fairly heavy for their size, otherwise they may be dry and cottony inside. Look for squash that have bright, glossy exteriors. Avoid buying squash that have nicks or bruises on their skins or ones that have soft spots.

### Storage

Place summer squash in plastic bags and store in the refrigerator. Fresh summer squash should keep for up to a week. Thicker-skinned varieties will stay fresh for two weeks or longer.

### How to Grow

Summer squash can be started from seed and will take about 55 days to mature when planted directly. A quicker way is to use a transplant which you start at home or purchase. Transplants will mature in about 45 days depending on the environmental conditions. As a general rule of thumb to avoid frost damage, plants should not be placed in Kentucky gardens until May 10.

### Presentation Plan

#### Grocery list:

A variety of summer squash for recipe and display, 1 medium onion, 1 medium red pepper, 1 - 8 ounce bag corn bread stuffing mix, 1-10<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> ounce can reduced fat cream of chicken soup, fat free sour cream, margarine

#### Equipment needs:

Stove top or microwave oven, cutting board, chef knife, paring knife, steamer, (pan with steamer for stove top demo; steamer bags or covered dish for microwave method; you might want to discuss both techniques), medium bowl, plastic zip bag or small bowl, 2 quart casserole dish, can opener, if soup does not have pull top, glass measuring cup, spoon or rubber spatula.

#### Display preparation:

- Slice squash and onion for recipe preparation and place in clear bowls; reserve at least one each of summer squash being used for demonstration and information sharing.
- Chop red pepper and place in small clear bowl
- Measure sour cream and place in small clear bowl
- Pour soup into clear bowl
- Measure stuffing into bowl or plastic zip bag
- Melt margarine in small bowl
- If using stove top method for steaming, heat water to decrease demonstration time
- Preheat oven to 350° F.
- Depending on time available, you might want to prepare a dish ahead and have ready for sampling after the demonstration.

#### Demonstration steps:

1. Discuss focus commodities and talking points.
2. Prepare recipe, discussing the function of the ingredients to the success of the final product. When steaming the vegetables, talk about the benefits of steaming versus cooking in water such as nutrient retention and resulting firmer product.
3. Put casserole in oven and bake for 45 minutes. If you have prepared one in advance go ahead and show end product.
4. Discuss other items you could serve with casserole to complete meal. Suggestions could include grilled chicken or butterfly pork chops and something cold such as a side salad.

## Squash Supreme

- 4 cups** sliced summer squash
- 1** medium onion, sliced
- ½ cup** diced red bell pepper
- 1 cup** fat free sour cream
- 1 - 10¾ ounce** can reduced fat cream of chicken soup
- 1½ cups** dry corn bread stuffing mix
- ¼ cup** melted margarine

**Directions:** Preheat oven to 350° F.

**Steam** the summer squash, onion, and red bell pepper until slightly tender.

**Combine** sour cream and cream of chicken soup.

**Add** steamed vegetables to soup mixture and toss to coat.

**Combine** corn bread stuffing mix and melted margarine.

**Place** half the stuffing mixture in the bottom of a greased 2-quart casserole dish.

**Add** vegetable mixture; top with remaining stuffing mix.

**Bake** for 45 minutes or until mixture bubbles.

**Yield:** 8, ½ cup servings

**Nutrition Analysis:** 170 calories; 7 g fat; 1.5 g sat fat; 5 mg cholesterol; 370 mg sodium; 22 g carbohydrate; 3 g fiber; 7 g sugar; 4 g protein.

**Source:** [www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov)

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For more delicious recipes and information using “Kentucky Proud” fruits and vegetables, contact your local Cooperative Extension Service or visit: [www.kentuckyproud.com](http://www.kentuckyproud.com).

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