**SUMMER SQUASH**

*Cafeteria | VermontHarvestoftheMonth.org*

*Harvest of the Month provides resources for the cafeteria, classroom, and community to promote the use of local, seasonal foods.*

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**Benefits**

Summer squash are an excellent source of potassium and vitamin A. They also contain vitamin C and folic acid.

**Tidbit**

Summer squash are more delicate than winter squash; they cannot be stored as long but involve less preparation when cooking. They have a mild flavor and can be eaten raw or cooked any number of ways. Although zucchini is the most popular summer squash, there are many varieties available in Vermont such as crookneck squash, pattypan squash, and yellow squash.

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**Mini-activities**

- Have students shave part of a squash to make squash ribbons that can be mixed into wide flat pasta. Toss this entrée with herbs and dressing.
- Have students taste test and compare different summer squash varieties, raw and lightly cooked.

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**Kid-friendly eating tips**

- Bake with summer squash—zucchini can be the main ingredient in bread and cookies.
- For a healthy entrée, make stuffed squash boats! Scoop out the seeds of a summer squash, stuff with veggies, beans, breadcrumbs, and cheese, and bake at 400 degrees for 20-25 minutes.
- Make crispy and crunchy zucchini chips for a snack. Thinly slice a large zucchini on a mandolin, brush the round pieces with olive oil, and sprinkle with sea salt. Bake at 425 degrees for 20-30 minutes or until crispy.
- Try "zucchini parm" for a fresh take on the classic Italian dish, chicken parmesan. Trade the meat for summer squash!

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**Selection Tip**

When shopping for summer squashes, choose those with firm and glossy skin. Skip those with blemishes or dull color, as these are indications that the squash may not be fresh or have been exposed to cold temperatures.

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**Storage Tip**

Unlike winter squashes, summer squashes are easily damaged. Be sure to handle them with care and wash just before using them. In the refrigerator, summer squashes will keep for about 1 week. If freezing, slice and blanch them first. If you plan on baking with your squash later, shred the raw squash and freeze in freezer-safe containers. Summer squash can be frozen for 3 to 4 months.

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**Cooking Tips**

- To prepare a summer squash, wash the skin and cut off both ends. There’s no need to peel a summer squash, as its skin is soft.
- To enhance the flavor of summer squashes, season them with spices or herbs. Experiment with fresh or dried oregano, basil, or parsley.

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