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## How to Freeze Summer Squash (Zucchini, Yellow Squash, Crookneck, Pattypan, Straightneck, White Scallop, etc.)

If you like frozen squash in the winter, just imagine how good it would taste if you had picked a firm, fresh squashes yourself and then quickly froze them at home! It is also one of the simplest ways to put up a vegetable for the winter. Here's how to do it, complete instructions in easy steps and completely illustrated. The squash will taste MUCH better than anything you've ever had from a store. And you might like this recipe, too: [How to make Grilled Summer Squash with Feta - which you can freeze for the winter, or serve fresh!](#)

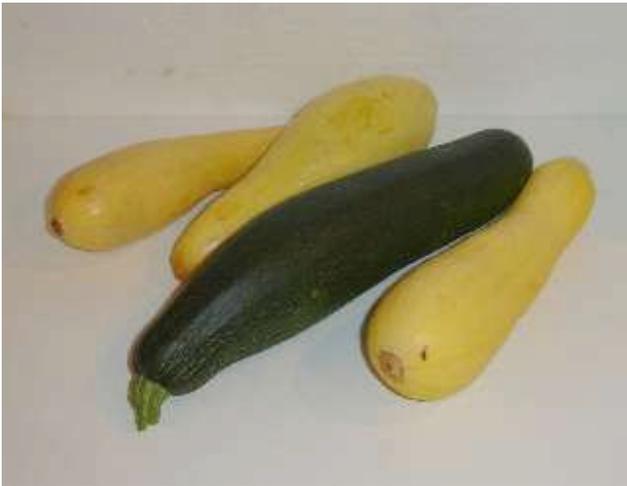
### Ingredients and Equipment

fresh summer squash - any quantity. I figure one medium sized squash per serving (it does cook down)

Vacuum food sealer or "ziploc" type freezer bags (the freezer bag version is heavier and protects better against freezer burn.

1 Large pot of boiling water  
2 large bowls, one filled with cold water and ice.  
1 sharp knife

## Instructions



### Step 1 - Get the squash!

Start with fresh squash - as fresh as you can get. If there is a delay between harvesting and freezing, put it in the refrigerator or put ice on it. Harvest before the seeds become mature and when color is still uniformly dark

### Step 2 - Wash the squash!

I'm sure you can figure out how to rinse the squash in plain cold or lukewarm water.

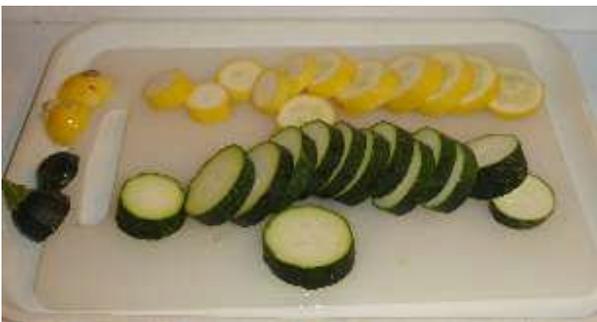


### Step 3 - Slice the squash

Just take a sharp knife and cut off both ends (about 1/4 of an inch, or half the width of an average woman's little finger)

Slice 1/2-inch thick slices.

Prepare quickly, (if you leave it sit out



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cut up for more than a half hour, it will start to discolor). Do enough squash for one blanching at a time.

NOTE: If you want grated zucchini for later baking, instead of slicing them, grate them. Then instead of water blanching them, steam blanch them in small quantities 1 to 2 minutes until translucent. Pack in measured amounts into containers, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Cool by placing the containers in cold water. Seal and freeze.

#### **Step 4 - Get the pots ready**

Get the pot of boiling water ready (about 2/3 filled). Also get a LARGE bowl of ice and cold water ready to receive the squash after blanching.



## Step 5 - Blanch the squash.

All fruits and vegetables contain **enzymes and bacteria** that, over time, break down the destroy nutrients and change the color, flavor, and texture of food during frozen storage. squash requires a brief heat treatment, called **blanching, in boiling water or steam**, to destroy the enzymes before freezing.

**Cook (blanch) the squash for 3 minutes.**

Begin counting the blanching time as soon as you place the squash in the boiling water. Cover the kettle and boil at a high temperature for the required



length of time. You may use the same blanching water several times (up to 5). Be sure to add more hot water from the tap from time to time to keep the water level at the required height.

## Step 6 - Cool the squash

Remove the squash from the boiling water with a slotted spoon and place in ice water to cool for about 5 minutes (until cold).

Cooling them quickly prevents overcooking. Keep adding more ice as needed.

Drain thoroughly (2 or 3 minutes)



## Step 7 - bag the squash

I love the FoodSavers ([see this page for more information](#)) with their vacuum sealing! I am not paid by them, but these things really work. If you don't have one, ziploc bags work, too, but it is hard to get as much air out of the bags. remove the air to prevent drying and freezer burn. **TIP:** If you don't a vacuum food sealer to freeze foods, place food in a Ziploc bags, zip the top shut but leave enough space to insert the tip of a soda straw. When straw is in place, remove air by sucking the air out. To remove straw, press straw closed where inserted and finish pressing the bag closed as you remove straw.



Foodsaver vac bag

### Note:

If the squash is very wet, after draining it, just put it in the food saver bag and freeze it (unsealed and upright) in your freezer. THEN, several hours later or the next day, when it is frozen, you can seal it with no mess!

## Step 8 - Done!

Pop them into the freezer, on the quick freeze shelf, if you have one!

### To later use the squash

Any frozen vegetable will be mushy when thawed, so obviously it's best to use in cooking, rather than attempting to use it raw.

You can let it thaw in the refrigerator, the microwave's defrost setting or just add it frozen to cooking.

I like to use it as a sautéed vegetable, so I partially thaw it, then sauté it in a pan with onions, red peppers and some seasoning (like Mrs. Dash or Herbs d' Provence)



Ziploc bag

## Tips:

- Harvest the squash at its peak maturity (firm, not limp or old)
- Process promptly after harvesting, or keep cooled in the fridge or with ice until then.
- If the squash is watery when thawed, discard the liquid before using.
- An alternative method is to cook the squash first - using your favorite recipe for a zucchini casserole, or sautéed squash, etc., and then simply freeze the cooked squash! Of course, it does take up more room in your freezer.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. How long can they be frozen?

It depends upon how cold is your freezer and how you packed them. Colder (deep freezes) are better than frost free compartments, which actually cycle above freezing (that's how they melt the ice). Vacuum packing results in longer storage capability, too. Thicker bags also help prevent freezer burn.

In general, up to 9 months in a ziploc bag in an ordinary freezer, and 14 months in a deep freeze in a vacuum packed bag. After that, they beans won't make you sick; they just won't taste a s good.

### 2. **Hi, I have a question about yellow squash. I am a newby to growing gardens but last year I did as said about the yellow squash (to freeze it). I have a vacuum sealer (love it). But when I pulled a package of squash out to eat it, it was so soggy. I also tried blanching for about a minute but it was all the same. When I take it out of the freezer I just warm the whole bag in water then open it. Just soggy. We like to eat it somewhat firm. I was told to just wash it, cut the ends off and freeze it. Is this safe?**

Yes, you can certainly freeze it without blanching. The purpose of blanching prior to freezing is to stop the enzymes that degrade the flavor, it's not for safety. As long as you eat the squash within 4 to 6 months, the flavor should be ok. Freezing without blanching may reducing the soggiess of the of the squash, but I doubt that it will help much. Freezing ruptures the cell walls and that is primarily what causes the soggiess.

I blanch if I am going to store them for a long time or use it in cooking. If I want to use a vegetable raw, and not keep it frozen for more than a few

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months, then I skip the blanching, too. But it still nowhere near as crisp as fresh.