



# Storing Your Summer Harvest

## Squash 101

- Squashes fall into two categories, winter squash and summer squash. The primary differences lie in their maturity at harvest and their growing times.

### Summer Squash

- Green and Yellow Zucchini
- Costata Romanesco Zucchini
- Eight Ball Zucchini
- Yellow squash
- Cousa Squash
- Zephyr Squash
- Pattypan Squash

### Winter Squash

- Acorn Squash.
- Banana Squash.
- Buttercup Squash.
- Butternut Squash.
- Carnival Squash.
- Delicata Squash.
- Hubbard Squash.
- Kabocha Squash.
- Spaghetti Squash
- Sugar Pumpkin
- Sweet Dumpling Squash
- Turban Squash

## Prepping Squash for Storage

- Remove dirt, and debris
- Wipe squash or pumpkins with damp cloth
  - Use mild chlorine bleach solution
  - 2 tablespoons to 1 gallon of water
  - Dry thoroughly
- Cure
- Do not store on cold concrete floor
- Do not stack
- Do not store near ripening fruit
- Discard if signs of decay

## Harvesting Squash

- Harvest winter squash when it is mature, firm, bright colored and has a hard rind. If you harvest before it matures, it will not store well.
- Dead vines do not necessarily indicate the squash are mature. If vines die prematurely from disease or stress the squash will stop growing and remain immature.
- Squash are ready for harvest when the rind is hard enough to resist fingernail scratches.

## Stems

- Cut the stem 2 to 4 inches from the fruit.
- Do not pick up freshly harvested fruit by the stem, as it may separate from the fruit and provide easy access for bacteria and dirt and contribute to spoilage.
- Pumpkins without stems do not store well.
- Hubbard-type squash stores best with the stems completely removed.



Squash Variety	Average Shelf Life
Acorn	1 to 2 months
Delicata	2 to 3 months
Spaghetti	2 to 3 months
Pumpkin	2 to 3 months
Butternut	3 to 6 months
Buttercup	3 to 6 months
Turban	3 to 6 months
Banana	3 to 6 months
Kabocha	4 to 6 months
Hubbard	4 to 6 months
Red-Skinned Hubbard (Red Kuri)	4 to 6 months
Cushaw	4 to 6 months

## Curing Squash

All squash undergo a slow curing process during proper storage. Artificial curing is not necessary for well matured squash under good storage conditions.

During the curing process the skin of squash becomes tougher, and cuts and scratches close, preventing access to microorganism and dirt.

Cure squash and pumpkin for 10 days at temperatures of 80 to 85°F with a relative humidity between 80 - 85%. Use a small cabinet heated with an electric heater, and thermostat to reach the ideal temperature. Or if curing a large amount of squash, create a curing chamber by cornering off a portion of a garage or shed with plastic. Use a small fan to help maintain good circulation and provide uniform distribution of heat.

## Extending Shelf-Life

The shelf life of produce decreases for a variety of reasons. Time, temperature, light, air, moisture, enzymes, and microorganisms all play an important part in how long food will last.

Having the ideal storage temperature when storing your harvest is critical to extending the shelf life. Allow enough space between items for air to circulate. Good ventilation will help prevent the formation of moisture between fruit and contact surface. Maintain adequate humidity while storing your produce. Having a dry storage area will cause fruit to shrivel and lose flavor, while having too much humidity will promote spoilage.

## Storing Winter Squash

Temperature: 50° to 55° F  
Relative humidity: 50 to 70%



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### References

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