

Seasonal Eating
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A Summer Squash Bonanza
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There are two questions when it comes to summer produce. The first is "when will the tomatoes be ripe?" The second is "I have a thousand summer squash coming in, what do I do?" While the first is hard to answer since each year they ripen up a little differently (the general answer is July), the second has many answers and here is one particularly tasty solution to the bonanza of squash.

Summer squash are characterized by an edible skin, as opposed to winter squash where the skin is hard and inedible, and include zucchini, yellow crookneck, yellow straight neck and pattypan, which look like little flying saucers. All of these are interchangeable in recipes and have a mild flavor that pairs well with

many things. Small to medium squash are the best, but if you miss a few and they get bigger just grate them up for use in breads or casseroles. The larger ones tend to be tougher with a tougher skin and larger seeds. The other thing about summer squash is that they are prolific in the garden and one plant will produce many, many squash which means you need many, many recipes to use them up!



I discovered this recipe for Zucchini Cornbread Casserole in several places on the internet and it is a great way to use up some of the abundance of squash. It is a cross between a vegetable casserole and cornbread with some vegetables in it and is packed with flavor. It is also packed with cheese so how can you go wrong there? If you don't have zucchini, use yellow squash or pattypan and while I used Cheddar cheese you can use whatever cheese you have (Colby, Monterey Jack, Pepper Jack, Swiss, a mixture, etc.). Be sure to drain your squash well. I lightly salted mine and let it sit in the strainer over a bowl for about 30 minutes or so and then took paper towels and pressed quite a bit more moisture out before adding it to my mixture. To make the 3 cups shredded, you will need one fairly large or two smaller zucchini.

The casserole is seasoned with onion powder, garlic powder, paprika, dried oregano, dried thyme, seasoned salt and pepper for a punch of comfort food flavor. You can substitute dill or sage for the oregano if you wish.

Serve this dish along with some grilled meat or poultry for a great dinner. You can store the leftovers in the refrigerator for a few days and it's really good heated up the next day in the microwave for breakfast!

Get out the shredder and make a casserole with that bonanza of squash coming in right now. Visit the Bedford County Extension website for more recipes and information about seasonal eating (bedford.tennessee.edu).

Zucchini Cornbread Casserole

3 cups shredded zucchini
kosher salt
3/4 cup chopped onion
2 eggs, beaten
12 ounces shredded Cheddar cheese, divided
1 (8 1/2-ounce) box sweet cornbread/corn muffin mix
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1/2 teaspoon onion powder
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
1/2 teaspoon seasoned salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper

Place shredded zucchini in a colander over a bowl. Sprinkle with a little kosher salt (a large pinch) and let drain for about 30 minutes. Press with paper towels to remove any excess moisture. Place in a large bowl and stir in the onion, eggs and 8 ounces of the cheese. Stir until well mixed. Add cornbread mix, paprika, oregano, onion powder, garlic powder, thyme, seasoned salt and pepper. Stir until mixed. Pour into a greased 8" square casserole dish. Sprinkle with remaining 4 ounces of cheese and bake in a 350 degree oven for 45 minutes.