



ZUCCHINIS/COURGETTES



INTRODUCTION

These are all members of the summer squash family. Zucchini/courgettes originated in Italy and were popular in the Mediterranean region hundreds of years before they became popular in the western world. The name courgette originated from France, whilst the name zucchini originated from Italy. In New Zealand we tend to use both names interchangeably. Some people also refer to them as baby marrows, which indeed they are. Marrows are simply mature or big zucchinis.

TYPES

Marrows:

Marrows have a coarser texture and less flavour than zucchinis. The popularity of marrows is declining. Unlike zucchinis, you do need to peel marrows and remove the seeds. Marrows may be steamed, boiled or fried. Baked stuffed marrows are particularly delicious. Cut them in half, do not peel, scoop out the centre and stuff with a savoury filling before baking.

Scallopini:

Small and spherical and usually a lighter green than marrows and zucchinis. Dark green and yellow varieties are also available. Scallopini are prepared in the same way as zucchinis. The shape of the scallopini makes them particularly appealing.

Zucchini or Courgettes:

Usually green-skinned but yellow-skinned varieties are also available. Zucchini are at their best when about 16–20cm long.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Choose summer squash that have glossy blemish free skins. Avoid any that show signs of softening or withering.

HOW TO KEEP

Store at 7-10°C with a relative humidity of 90-98%. Lower temperatures will cause chilling damage. Zucchini are ethylene sensitive which means they should be stored separately from ethylene producing products.

Consumer Storage: Refrigerate in plastic bags. Use promptly.

NUTRITIONAL VALUE

A good source of vitamin C and fibre.

HOW TO PREPARE

Zucchini and scallopini are very versatile and easy to prepare. Simply trim the stalk end off and eat either raw or cooked. There is no need to peel them. Some older cookbooks will recommend slicing zucchini and sprinkling them with salt to remove bitterness, with today's varieties this is not necessary.

WAYS TO EAT THIS VEGETABLE

Steam, boil, microwave, bake, stir-fry or grill zucchini or scallopini as a side vegetable. They are particularly good in stir-fries and barbecues or filled with a savoury stuffing and baked. They are good when used raw in salads. Zucchini can also be grated or finely chopped and used in flans or quiches. In a similar manner to carrots they also make delicious moist cakes and breads.

WHEN YOU CAN GET IT

They are available all year round with the main growing season from October until May.

TIPS FOR RETAILING

Display in refrigerated shelving only 2-3 layers deep. Handle very carefully as the skin is easily damaged. Summer squash are ethylene sensitive, so take care to store away from ethylene producing fruits and vegetables.