



Grilled Giant Squash

By Chris Duke

Anna's Gourmet Goodies



Whether you manage a window box, a few large barrels, or a patch of ground covered in vegetables, gardeners understand the pleasures of plucking something fresh from the earth and enjoying the fruits of your efforts. In our house, it's not really summer until you've had that first BLT with a juicy red tomato, minutes off the vine, still warm from the sun.

If you have neglected to harvest your squash and/or zucchini for a

couple of days, you may end up with something most gardeners who have grown these vegetables face – the giant squash. True, the smaller variety of this vegetable is tender and tasty, but large squash can be excellent when properly prepared.

So if you have some oversized squash on hand, try this recipe. And if you don't, that's okay. Head out to the Farmer's Market or your local grocery and pick up a couple of the largest specimens you can find for the grill.

Ingredients:

- Large squash (yellow or zucchini)
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt
- Fresh ground pepper

Cut off the ends of the squash and cut across to create sections that are approximately 4-5" long. Carefully slice a small piece of the outside of a section lengthwise to create a flat surface. Then continue cutting lengthwise into 1/4" pieces – I like to think of them as steaks.

Place the steaks in a large bowl and coat thoroughly with olive oil. Yes, you'll need to get your hands in there to do the job right, but that's part of the fun. Wash your hands, then sprinkle lightly (to taste) with the kosher salt, turning pieces to make sure all sides

are seasoned. Repeat this process with the fresh ground pepper. Set aside for 10 minutes to let the oil and seasoning begin to absorb into the squash.

Pre-heat your grill – I like to start with the high setting to burn off the grate and sear the vegetables. Turn the heat down to medium-low and gently lay the squash on the grill. Close the lid (if you have one) and cook for approximately 4 minutes, or until sections of the top begin to turn translucent. Grills cook differently, so watch the time, but you want them still firm when you turn them over. Using a spatula, turn the squash and finish cooking on the other side for about 4 minutes. The steaks should be cooked, but not totally limp, they'll continue to cook when removed from the grill.

It is a simple way to enjoy one of the fruits of a summer garden. And if by chance there are leftovers, save them for tomorrow. They are great chopped up in a salad, or even better, make a sandwich with toasted bread, fresh mozzarella and a little pesto-mayonnaise – yum!

If you have questions or would like to see something in the future, please drop a note to chris@annasgourmetgoodies.com.

Bon Appetit!