
SQUASH SUMMER HUNGER

EVENT PLANNING TOOLKIT



WWW.UTFARMTOFORK.ORG

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WHAT IS SQUASH SUMMER HUNGER?



Squash Summer Hunger is a fun promotional event intended to help raise awareness about the availability of summer meals programs and help utilize the bounty of squash available during the summer months. Every year during the last week in June, we encourage Utah kids and families to visit a summer meal site and join us in celebrating summer squash in all its forms. Squash Summer Hunger is a great way to get excited about delicious local produce, help kids understand where their food comes from, and support local farmers.

Although this toolkit is geared toward summer meal sites, we encourage everyone to participate in Squash Summer Hunger! Childcare centers, summer camps, and workplaces are all invited to join in the fun.

Summer squash is also a featured crop in the Utah Harvest of the Season Program. You can find more information about seasonal eating, including recipes and learning activities, at utfarmtofork.org/harvest-of-the-season.

GETTING STARTED

Sometimes the hardest part of holding a farm to fork event is knowing what you need to do. The six steps on this page walk you through a successful Squash Summer Hunger event from start to finish.

STEP 1 REGISTER YOUR EVENT

Registering your event helps us track participation from year to year. We use this data to ask for more support and funding for farm to fork initiatives. Registration is also a chance for you to let us know if you need any additional resources or information to make your day a success. Register your event at www.utfarmtofork.org/Squash-Summer-Hunger.

STEP 2 ASSEMBLE A TEAM

The more people you have working together, the easier it will be to pull off a fun and exciting event. You can find a list of potential partners on **page 3**.

STEP 3 FIND YOUR SQUASH

Did you know there are over 20 varieties of summer squash? See the Purchase Your Squash section on **page 4** for tips on procurement. Or download the Growing Guide on our resource page if you'd like to grow your own squash.

STEP 4 EXPAND THE ADVENTURE

In addition to eating summer squash, there are many other activities you can do for a full day of fun. Consider using some of the activities on **pages 6-8** to make the day even more exciting.

STEP 5 SPREAD THE WORD

Farm to fork activities benefit the whole community—so let the community know what you're doing. See the Share Your Story section on **page 11** for tips on spreading the word to build excitement, fundraise, or find volunteers. Use the included press release to publicize your event to local media, and the hashtags **#SquashSummerHunger**, **#UTFarm2fork**, and **#farmtoschool** to celebrate on social media. Don't forget to tag the Utah Farm to Fork Task Force on Instagram **@UTFarm2fork** and on Facebook **@UtahFarm2Fork**.

STEP 6 KEEP THE MOMENTUM GOING

How will you continue to include local squash and other Utah food in your menus after the Squash Summer Hunger event is over? Were there parents or community members involved that might be interested in helping start a school or community garden? Do teachers want to organize farm field trips or include more ag-related lessons in their classrooms? Squash Summer Hunger is just the beginning of an amazing journey. You can also start planning for our other two promotional events: **The Great Apple Crunch** in October and **Raising the Steaks** in April.

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

Putting together a team is a critical step in holding a successful Squash Summer Hunger event. These are some potential groups you may wish to partner with.

Local Health Departments

Every health department in Utah has at least one health promotion specialist who works on initiatives like healthy eating, physical activity, tobacco cessation, and diabetes prevention. They are often happy to help with farm to fork events. Find contact information for your closest health department here:

<https://www.naccho.org/membership/lhd-directory?searchType=standard&lhd-state=UT>

County Extension Offices

USU Extension has offices in 29 counties across Utah. These offices house programs like 4-H and Create Better Health, and can also connect you with Master Gardeners and Food Preservers. A directory of county offices is available here:

<https://extension.usu.edu/locations>

Public Libraries

Local libraries are often happy to help support community events. A list of Utah libraries is available here:

<https://library.utah.gov/directory/>

Other Ideas

Local non-profits, medical centers, city/county recreation departments, and faith-based organizations are other great resources in your community who may be interested in partnering with you.

The Utah Farm to Fork Task Force is here to help! Email us at contact@utfarmtofork.org with any questions or concerns.



PURCHASE YOUR SQUASH

Remember that one of the goals of the Squash Summer Hunger is to support your local farmers. You can do this by purchasing the (literal) fruits of their labor! Make a plan to buy squash instead of asking for donations.

HOW WILL YOU DEFINE LOCAL?

Your Squash Summer Hunger event should feature local squash, but you have some flexibility as to how you define “local”. Depending on where you are located and how much squash you need, you may be able to purchase squash grown in the same town or county, or you may have to expand your definition to “a 200 mile radius” or “the state of Utah”. Make sure you communicate your definition of local to the person who will actually be purchasing the squash. If you are serving your squash as part of a Seamless Summer Option meal and want your squash purchase to qualify for the Enhanced State Reimbursement, be sure to follow the guidelines for that program (available at <https://www.utfarmtofork.org/local-procurement>). It’s also okay to use squash from home or school gardens.

HOW MUCH SQUASH DO YOU NEED?

How much squash you need will depend on how many people you are serving and how the squash will be prepared. Generally, plan on at least $\frac{3}{4}$ **cup per person**. You can download the Squash Calculator from our resources page to translate the number of servings and serving size into pounds (or number of) squash. Of course, if you are using the squash in a recipe like pasta or zucchini bread, the amount you need will be different.



HOW MUCH WILL YOU SPEND?

Remember that state and federal procurement guidelines do apply to all purchases made for Child Nutrition Programs. If you are spending less than the applicable micropurchase threshold, you do not need to obtain quotes to purchase your squash. If you are spending an amount between your small purchase and micropurchase thresholds, small purchase rules apply (obtain three quotes, and document them). Contact USBE Child Nutrition Programs at (801) 538-7680 if you have questions about procurement thresholds and guidelines.

WHERE CAN I FIND LOCAL SQUASH?

You have several options for purchasing local squash:

- Ask your distributor if they are able to supply you with local squash.
- Reach out to a grocery store that sells local produce—they may be willing to provide you with local squash at a volume discount.
- Buy directly from a farmer. You can contact a farmer you already know or use the farmer list available at www.utfarmtofork.org/utah-producers to find someone new.
- Grow your own! If you only need a small amount (for example, if you run a family daycare home) and have access to a garden, include summer squash in your garden plans.

LARGE QUANTITY ORDERS

If you need to purchase a large amount of squash, you may want to consider entering into a *forward contract* or *planting agreement* with a farmer. With a forward contract, you complete the procurement process before the farmer produces the food. For example, signing a contract for summer squash or zucchini in early March gives the farmer time to plan their growing space and start seeds specifically for you. Then, when it's time for your Squash Summer Hunger event at the end of June, you know that you have squash available just for you. Forward contracting also allows you to take advantage of slower times of the year (for both you and farmers) to do your planning. If you'd like to learn more about forward contracting, you can [**book a personalized online training session here.**](#)

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

Serving squash is just the beginning! Consider adding one or more of these activities to add to the fun at your event.

Taste test multiple squash varieties and vote on your favorite kind.

Here are just a few you might try:

- o Early Summer Crookneck
- o Yellow Straightneck
- o Black Beauty Zucchini
- o Cocozelle Striped Zucchini
- o Golden Zebra
- o Golden Egg
- o Ronde de Nice
- o Sunburst
- o Bennings Green Tint
- o Cousa
- o Tromboncino

Lead a hands-on cooking class featuring summer squash.



Photo by Brooke Lark on Unsplash

Invite a local farmer to your summer meal site to participate in the event.

They can read a story to younger students, help serve food, or talk to older students about how summer squash is grown.

Arrange a field trip to a local farm to learn how summer squash are grown.

Visit the farm to fork website for our farm field trip guide, along with a list of farms in your area who are interested in hosting students.

Use squash (or other vegetables) to make musical instruments.

o Watch this 3 minute video about the vegetable orchestra for inspiration:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xM1EjIDLMLY>

o This video shows you how to make a horn out of the zucchini plant:

<https://mashable.com/video/zucchini-horn-how-to>

o Find detailed instructions for creating a variety of vegetable instruments here:

<http://salfordacoustics.co.uk/vegetable-instruments>

Have a squash or garden-themed costume contest.

Award categories could include:

- o Best handmade costume
- o Funniest costume
- o Best group costume
- o Most realistic/scientifically accurate costume

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

Play summer squash trivia.

Here are some fun facts to get you started:

- o The entire squash plant is edible—in addition to the squash itself, you can eat the leaves, blossoms, and seeds.
- o The heaviest zucchini ever grown (so far!) weighed 115 pounds.
- o The world's longest zucchini was 8 feet 3 inches long.
- o Most of the nutrients in summer squash are found in the skin—the inside of the squash is mostly water.
- o Scientists have found summer squash seeds preserved in Mexican caves that are over 10,000 years old.

Have a squash-themed art contest or showcase.

- o If you have access to extra squash, you can carve them, paint them, or cut them into shapes for print-making.
- o Build fairy houses with extra large squash, buttons, leaves, and dried fruits or veggies.
- o Make sidewalk chalk drawings of squash.
- o For the youngest participants, print out coloring sheets from our resource page that they can decorate with crayons.



Sing some songs about zucchini.

Sing along to one of these songs on YouTube, or make up your own:

- o The Zucchini Song by the Zucchini Brothers:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnu0QiyBLZI>

- o Green Zucchini Storytime Song:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNoTMo5gMHM>

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

Set up a DIY photo booth.

All you need is a blank wall, phone or digital camera, and some fun farm-related costume pieces and props. Don't forget to appoint a parent, teacher, student or community member to act as photographer/videographer and capture all the action, both in and out of the booth!

Plant your own summer squash.

Summer squash grows well in Utah and most varieties take about 60 days to be ready to harvest. You can either plant them in late April/early May to harvest at your event, or you can plant them as part of your celebration and still have time to harvest them in September before it gets too cold. **USU Extension has a great guide on growing summer squash in Utah**, also available in PDF form on our website.

You can even make it a contest-- who can grow the biggest squash? The funniest-looking squash? The most squash on one plant?

Hunt for squash bugs.

If you garden and grow squash in Utah, then you've likely dealt with squash bugs. Make a "squash bug hunt" part of your festivities. Teach kids how to recognize squash bug eggs, teach them how to safely remove them from a leaf, and put them to work!

This is an especially great idea if you've planted summer squash as part of your event.

You can find USU Extension resources on squash bug management here: **https://extension.usu.edu/pests/ipm/notes_ag/veg-squashbug**

Read a story about summer squash.

Here are a few book recommendations:

- o Zora's Zucchini by Katherine Pryor
- o Zucchini Summer by Anne Siegrist
- o The Garden Gang: Sammy Squash by M'Lynn Erin Miller
- o How to Grow a Monster by Kiki Thorpe

Watch the Sesame Street musical production "Veg Side Story".

This three minute musical goes to show you never know if you'll like a food until you try it! Watch it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QiEnCJ3BEo0>



SUMMER SQUASH RECIPES



Our Cheesy Ratatouille Pasta recipe was developed by Chef Cyndie Story especially for Utah child nutrition programs! Two #6 scoops provide 2 oz. eq. whole grains, 2 oz. eq. m/ma, 1/2 cup red/orange vegetable, and 1/8 cup other vegetable, making it the perfect entrée to highlight at your Squash Summer Hunger event.

You can find the full preparation instructions, along with more of Chef Cyndie's delicious scratch recipes and seasonal cycle menus at our Harvest of the Season page:

www.utfarmtofork.org/harvest-of-the-season.

CHEESY RATATOUILLE PASTA

Makes 96 servings of two #6 scoops.

Ingredients

9 lb. whole grain rich penne pasta
3 lb. fresh eggplant
1 1/2 cup diced onion
3 lb. yellow squash
3 lb. zucchini
1/4 cup granulated garlic
2 tsp. salt
3 (#10) cans low sodium white beans, rinsed
3 (#10) cans marinara sauce
3 Tbsp. dried oregano leaves
3 Tbsp. + 1 tsp. dried thyme leaves
1 cup fresh basil, chiffonade
1 lb. grated Parmesan
6 lb. shredded mozzarella



Basic Instructions

Prepare the pasta.
Sauté the fresh veggies in a tilt skillet and season.
Add beans and marinara sauce and simmer.
Stir in pasta.
Transfer to steam table pans, top with cheese, and bake 3-5 minutes.
Garnish with basil before serving.

[Click here for full instructions and nutrient analysis.](#)

SUMMER SQUASH RECIPES

These whole grain zucchini muffins are a healthy sweet treat that can be enjoyed at breakfast, lunch, or snack.

WHOLE GRAIN ZUCCHINI MUFFINS

1 quart + 1 cup Sugar
1 1/2 cups Canola Oil
1 1/2 cups Yogurt, plain
9 Eggs, large
10 cups Zucchini, grated & liquid squeezed out
3 Tbsp Vanilla
5 cups Flour, all purpose
6 1/4 cups Flour, whole wheat
1 Tbsp Salt
1 Tbsp Baking Soda
3/4 tsp Baking Powder
3 Tbsp Cinnamon

Prepare muffin tins by spraying liberally with pan spray or line with paper liners. Preheat oven to 350 degrees (conventional) or 325 degrees (convection). Beat or mix well: sugar, eggs, oil, yogurt, vanilla, and zucchini. Stir or mix well to dissolve sugar and combine.

In a separate bowl mix dry ingredients to combine. Pour dry ingredients into wet ingredients. Stir or mix for 1-2 minutes to combine. Do not overmix! The batter will be slightly lumpy.

Scoop 1/3 cup into each tin using a #12 scoop.

Bake until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Conventional oven: 20-25 mins. Convection oven: 16-20 mins.

CCP: Heat to an internal temp of 165 degrees for 15 seconds.

Makes 75 muffins. Each muffin credits as 1 oz. eq. whole grain and 1/8 cup other vegetable.



Recipe Courtesy of Illinois Harvest of the Month; photo courtesy of Sally's Baking Addiction

SHARE YOUR STORY

Spread the word—make sure your everyone knows what you are doing to Squash Summer Hunger!

TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Be sure to let local newspaper and television reporters know about your event by sending a press release or invitation to join your event. Use our template on **page 12** or craft your own. Your Squash Summer Hunger celebration is a way to share more about your summer meal programs and farm to fork!

SOCIAL MEDIA

Get out your cameras, smartphones, or video devices and take a “squash byte” to share through social media! Share your event across the state through Facebook and other social media platforms. Make sure you have appropriate photo releases—not to worry, we have additional guidance on **page 13**. Not a social media star (yet)? We’ve got you covered with these simple ways to share on a variety of platforms.

FACEBOOK



- Link to the Squash Summer Hunger Toolkit or other resources you like
- Share a few sentences about your favorite part of the celebration
- Create an album highlighting your best pictures from the event
- Share other **#SquashSummerHunger** posts on your page

INSTAGRAM



- Post snapshots of everyone snacking on squash
- Make a story of Squash Day highlights
- Set up a photo booth with fun props and share the pictures
- using **#SquashSummerHunger**
- Create a Reel of you having fun with summer squash—dancing, juggling, or playing catch



- Share a fun fact about squash
- Create a poll and ask others what they are doing for Squash Day
- @mention community partners or other organizations who are helping with Squash Day
- Follow **#SquashSummerHunger** and like/follow/reshare other posts!

TIKTOK



- Demo your favorite summer squash recipe and ask others to stitch theirs
- Create a dance routine to your favorite zucchini-themed song
- Review your favorite squash variety and ask others to duet theirs

Amplify your posts by using the hashtags **#SquashSummerHunger**, **#UTfarm2fork**, and **#farmtoschool** whenever you share. You can also tag the official Utah Farm to Fork accounts: **@utfarm2fork** on Instagram and **@utahfarm2fork** on Facebook

PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

COPY AND PASTE THIS PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE INTO A NEW DOCUMENT. THEN PERSONALIZE ALL OF THE PORTIONS IN {BRACKETS}, ADD ANY CONTENT SPECIFIC TO YOUR EVENT, AND SEND IT OUT TO YOUR LOCAL MEDIA AND NEWS OUTLETS.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT
{NAME}
{SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION}
{PHONE}
{EMAIL OR OTHER CONTACT}

June {XX}, 20{XX}

It's time to SQUASH SUMMER HUNGER. {TOWN/SCHOOL NAME}

{TOWN/SCHOOL NAME} is joining summer meal sites, preschools, day camps, and individuals across Utah in celebrating our abundance of local food by enjoying Utah-grown summer squash and zucchini on {DATE}!

{PROVIDE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF YOUR EVENT, ACTIVITIES, LOGISTICS, HOW PARENTS/COMMUNITY CAN BE INVOLVED. BE SURE TO STATE WHETHER IT IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC}

This collective celebration encourages healthy eating and helps to raise awareness of our summer meal programs—essential to keeping kids fed when school is not in session. The event also supports farm to fork and other local food purchasing initiatives throughout Utah. {DESCRIBE HOW IT CONNECTS TO ANY OTHER ACTIVITIES/INITIATIVES YOU PARTICIPATE IN, OR YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION}.

For more information, or to join us, please contact {CONTACT NAME} at {CONTACT PHONE AND/OR EMAIL}.

More information about the statewide Squash Summer Hunger event can be found at www.utfarmtofork.org/SquashSummerHunger.

To find a summer meal site near you, visit fns.usda.gov/meals4kids.

-end-

PHOTO RELEASE/NOTIFICATION

It is highly recommended that you obtain permission to photograph any Squash Summer Hunger participants. If you are holding your event at a site with enrolled participants, you likely will not need a separate release if one was signed during enrollment (check your internal policy to be sure).



If your event is open to the public, you are not required to have a release for publicity and photographs. However, if you plan to take pictures or have invited the media to your event, it is still a good idea to have a sign posted informing people of the possibility that their photos will be shared and giving them the option to opt out. If you have a lot of people at the event, you may wish to use neon-colored stickers to identify participants who do not wish to be photographed. Sample text of a statement you may provide participants at check-in is provided below.

SAMPLE PUBLIC EVENT MEDIA NOTIFICATION STATEMENT

I understand that by attending this event, my picture, image, voice, likeness (including photos and video) may be used in media, advocacy or marketing efforts connected with summer meals, the Squash Summer Hunger event, or {ORGANIZATION NAME}. Pictures, articles, and videos may appear in local media or USDA publications. These images, etc. may or may not personally identify me. I will not receive any monetary consideration for use of these images, etc. If I do not wish my likeness to be used, I agree to notify the event organizer before participating in any Squash Summer Hunger Activities.

{ORGANIZATION NAME} has no control of media or statements which are taken without express permission.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

Engaging in Squash Summer Hunger marks the beginning of an incredible Farm to Fork journey. Interested in incorporating more local food into your menus? Considering organizing farm field trips or integrating agricultural-related lessons in classrooms? Farm to Fork provides support with resources and ideas. Keep the momentum alive by joining our other farm to fork promotional events!

APPLE CRUNCH DAY



Each October, schools, preschools, workplaces, and individuals across Utah celebrate National Farm to School Month by crunching into Utah-grown apples. The Apple Crunch is a way to get excited about delicious local produce, help students understand where their food comes from, and support local farmers. Across the state, students taste-test different apple varieties, take field trips to local farms, and participate in other apple-themed learning activities.

The Apple Crunch is always held the last Wednesday in October. If that day doesn't work for your schedule, you can always pick a different day in October to celebrate.

Learn more about Apple Crunch Day, register, and find resources at www.utfarmtofork.org/utah-apple-crunch.

HARVEST GRATITUDE DAY

Each November, we honor the hard-working farmers and ranchers who provide food for our tables. Harvest Gratitude Day is an interactive, online learning experience for middle and high school students to learn about the importance of agriculture and where their food comes from.



Learn more about Apple Crunch Day, register, and find resources at www.utfarmtofork.org/harvest-gratitude-day.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

RAISING THE STEAKS: CELEBRATING UTAH MEAT

Raising the Steaks isn't just for steak... or hamburger, or chicken. It's a celebration of *all* the amazing meat products we raise and eat here in Utah. Did you know Sanpete County has more turkeys than people? And that Utah's trout farms produce products from smoked trout to caviar? Every April, we come together to celebrate Utah beef, bison, lamb, turkey, pork, fish, and more.



Learn more about this delicious event and register to join the fun at www.utfarmtofork.org/raising-the-steaks.