

Summer Soup

1 lb spicy or sweet Italian sausage, casings removed
½ red onion, sliced into quarter moons
1 shallot, sliced
2 tbsp chopped garlic
1 yellow squash, cut into pieces that will fit on a spoon
1 zucchini, cut into pieces that will fit on a spoon
3 cups chicken stock
¼ tsp each chili flakes, fennel seeds, garlic powder, onion powder, thyme, and rosemary



This soup has a special place in my heart. The ingredients tell the story of how it came to be. As a first-year culinary student, I bought sausage and squash because they were cheap. I discovered that I could combine them together with a lot of onion (another cheap ingredient) and make something that was easy, filling, at least semi-nutritious and could keep me fed for days. What's more, it was *good*. Sometimes I would add potatoes or rice or eggplant, but I found my favorite version was just onion and squash.

Thankfully, my circumstances have improved since those first broke days. Even more thankfully, my taste for this soup has grown even stronger. Now, I use more sausage than I used to. I use fresh garlic instead of just powder. I make my own chicken stock. I only make this soup in the summer when the squashes are practically drowning everyone in the market. But I still make it, to honor the place I came from, and to hope for the places I'm going. I make it to help remind myself of no matter how much life changes, no matter how much *I* change, some things don't; and that summer squash and sausage will always be delicious together

Brown the sausage in a large pot over medium-high heat, breaking it up so that no piece is too big to fit on a spoon. Once the sausage has some color on it, add in the onion and shallot. Give them a few minutes to cook in all the tasty sausage fat, then add the garlic.

Once you can smell the garlic, add in all the squash. Let everything cook together. This was always my favorite part, standing over that white enameled gas stove, in the apartment that had seriously sub-par air conditioning. I'd open the kitchen door to the fire escape and get lost in the smell of squash cooking in sausage fat. You can technically skip cooking the squash in sausage, and just add in all the stock, but you'd miss the smell.

Give the squash as much time as you'd like to cook before you add the stock. I usually spend about ten minutes happily stirring it around. Add in your stock and all the remaining seasonings. Let the soup simmer until the seedy bits of the squash start to fall out of the squash middles, about 40 minutes.

Serve hot, with toast if you'd like it.