

Let's Enjoy Zucchini!

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Zucchini is a type of summer squash that can be used in a variety of ways. Whether you make it sweet, spicy or savory, it provides a nourishing amount of vitamins A, C and K, plus potassium and other minerals.

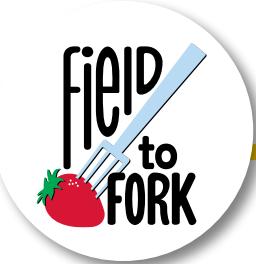
One cup of cooked zucchini has just 17 calories. You can eat zucchini raw or cook it in an oven, an air-fryer, a microwave, on the stove or a grill and in a variety of recipes.

Be sure to rinse the zucchini under cool, running water just before you plan to use it in a recipe.

This handout provides tips and recipes for preparing and preserving zucchini. See the section about squash at www.ag.ndsu.edu/fieldtofork for more information

Key to abbreviations

c. = cup
oz. = ounce
tsp. = teaspoon
Tbsp. = tablespoon
g = gram
mg = milligram



Enjoy Zucchini With or Without a Recipe

BOATS: Rinse then cut the squash in half lengthwise and scoop out the seeds, creating a "zucchini boat." Drizzle the zucchini with olive oil and season to taste with salt and pepper. Roast cut side down at 400 degrees until a fork inserts easily, about 30 to 60 minutes. Alternately, cook in boiling water. Fill with your favorite stuffing, such as hot dish, taco meat or stuffing and bake at 350 F until heated through.

MEATLOAF OR MEATBALLS: Add grated zucchini to meat loaf or meatballs to keep the recipe moist. Use about 1 cup of grated zucchini per pound of ground meat.

STEAMED: Steam zucchini in the microwave. Cut the squash into bite-size pieces and place them into a microwave-safe bowl. Add 1 to 2 tablespoons of water. Cover the bowl with a lid, but leave one corner of the lid slightly open. Cook the zucchini on high for four to five minutes, until soft.

SAUTEED: Enhance the flavor of zucchini by sautéing on a stovetop. Slice the squash into bite-size pieces or make "zoodles" (zucchini noodles) by slicing into thin strips with a knife or vegetable peeler, or using a "vegetable spiralizer." Next, mix the zucchini with 1 to 2 teaspoons of olive oil in a pan and cook over medium heat. The zucchini should be tender and lightly brown. Season to taste.

GRILLED: To cook zucchini on the grill, slice it into ½-inch-thick pieces. Place in a bowl, then add a small amount of olive oil and sprinkle with seasoning. Place the zucchini on a grill pan or wrap in aluminum foil. If you want grill marks, slice the zucchini lengthwise and place over the grates. Grill zucchini over medium-low heat for 3 to 4 minutes per side.

CHIPS: For a crunchy texture, consider using an air-fryer. An air-fryer commonly is used to create "zucchini chips." Start by thinly slicing the zucchini, then pat dry with a paper towel to get rid of excess moisture. Next, drizzle the zucchini with olive oil, salt and pepper. Place the slices of zucchini in the basket of the air-fryer. Cook at 350 F for 8 minutes. The cook time may vary, depending on the thickness of the zucchini slices.

Try the blossoms. Zucchini blossoms can be added to soup, salads, quesadillas and many other foods. If you eat the blossoms, they won't form more zucchini!



Skillet Zucchini With Chopped Tomatoes

1 tsp. olive oil or canola oil	2 medium tomatoes, chopped
1 c. chopped onion	Freshly ground pepper
4 small (6-inch) zucchini, thinly sliced	Grated parmesan cheese (optional)

In a large, nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium heat; add onions and cook, stirring until softened. Add zucchini and cook for 2 minutes. Add tomatoes and cook for 3 to 5 minutes or until zucchini is tender-crisp. Season to taste with pepper and add a sprinkle of Parmesan cheese if you wish.

Makes four servings. Each (1-cup) serving has 70 calories, 2 g fat, 3 g protein, 12 g carbohydrate and 15 mg sodium.

Zucchini Rollups

24 zucchini strips (about 2 zucchini)
2 tsp. olive oil
2 tsp. minced garlic
2 c. fresh spinach, chopped
1 c. ricotta cheese, part skim
2 Tbsp. fresh basil, finely sliced
Pepper to taste
1 c. spaghetti sauce
½ c. shredded mozzarella cheese

Using a vegetable peeler, peel each zucchini into wide strips. Layer 2 strips vertically and 2 strips horizontally to make a cross. Repeat with remaining strips. Over medium heat, sauté garlic and olive oil. Add spinach and sauté until wilted. Remove from heat and allow to cool. In a large bowl, combine the spinach, garlic, ricotta, basil and pepper. Using a spoon, scoop 1 tablespoon of the mixture and place in the middle of each zucchini strip cross. Fold each side to seal in the ricotta mixture, then flip over the zucchini so the seam side is on the bottom. In a baking dish, pour in the marinara sauce, then smooth with a spatula. Evenly place the zucchini rollups on the sauce, then top with mozzarella cheese. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes at 425 F.

Makes four servings. Each serving has 190 calories, 11 g fat, 13 g protein, 12 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber and 440 mg sodium.

Zucchini Bread

3 ¼ c. all-purpose flour
1 ½ tsp. salt
1 tsp. ground nutmeg
2 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
3 c. sugar
1 c. vegetable oil
4 eggs, beaten
⅓ c. water
2 c. grated zucchini
1 tsp. lemon juice
1 c. chopped pecans or walnuts (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 F. In a large bowl, combine flour, salt, nutmeg, baking soda, cinnamon and sugar. In a separate bowl, combine oil, eggs, water, zucchini and lemon juice. Mix wet ingredients into dry and add nuts. Bake in 2 standard loaf pans, sprayed with nonstick spray, for 1 hour.

Makes two loaves of bread (24 servings). With nuts, each serving has 270 calories, 12 g fat, 3 g protein, 38 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber and 260 mg sodium.



Zucchini Chocolate Cake

1 ½ c. butter, softened	2 ¼ c. all-purpose flour
1 ¼ c. sugar	1 ½ tsp. baking powder
2 eggs	1 tsp. salt
½ c. buttermilk	¼ tsp. baking soda
½ c. unsweetened applesauce	2 c. zucchini, shredded
2 oz. semisweet chocolate, melted	2 tsp. confectioners' sugar
1 tsp. vanilla extract	

In a large bowl, beat butter and sugar until crumbly, about 2 minutes. Add eggs; mix well. Beat in the buttermilk, applesauce, chocolate and vanilla. Combine the flour, baking powder, salt and baking soda; beat into butter mixture just until moistened. Stir in zucchini. Transfer to a 13- by 9-inch baking dish coated with cooking spray. Bake at 350 F for 30 to 35 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack. Tip: Place confectioners (powdered) sugar in a shaker or sifter and sprinkle the dessert with sugar.

Makes 18 servings. Each serving has 172 calories, 5 g fat, 3 g protein, 29 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber and 223 mg sodium.



Zucchini Pizza Bites

2 medium zucchini
Salt and pepper to taste
¼ c. pizza sauce
½ c. shredded part-skim mozzarella
¼ c. mini pepperonis
Sprinkle of Italian seasoning, optional

Preheat oven to 400 F. Cut zucchini into ¼-inch-thick rounds. Spray both sides of zucchini rounds with nonstick cooking spray and place on baking sheet. Sprinkle zucchini with salt and pepper to taste. Roast zucchini rounds for 5 minutes on each side. Top each round with a small amount of pizza sauce, a sprinkle of cheese and pepperoni pieces. Roast for an additional 5 minutes or until cheese is melted, being careful not to burn. Sprinkle with Italian seasoning and serve.

Makes six servings. Each serving has 90 calories, 5 g fat, 5 g protein, 5 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber and 250 mg sodium.

Freezing Zucchini

Rinse zucchini, then grate or slice it with or without the skin. Freeze zucchini by slicing or grating; blanch (scald) in boiling water for 1 minute if grated or 3 minutes if sliced; drain thoroughly, then package in freezer containers. Label with contents and date. Remember to drain it before adding to your favorite recipe.

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