

What to Do with Zucchini!

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Got zucchini?

Whether purchasing or picking zucchini—choose firm, slender zucchini with a bright green color and free of wrinkled skin and soft spots. For best quality, harvest zucchini when it is young and tender, about 6 to 8 inches long and about 2 inches in diameter. As zucchini gets longer and bigger around, it becomes tougher and develops more seeds. These larger zucchini can be used in zucchini bread; scoop out seeds and pulp with the tip of a spoon.

Store unwashed zucchini in perforated plastic bags in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator; wash zucchini just before preparation. “You can either purchase perforated plastic bags or make small holes with a sharp object in unperforated plastic bags (about 20 holes per medium-size bag),” according to the Postharvest Technology Research and Information Center, Department of Pomology, University of California, Davis

(<http://homeorchard.ucdavis.edu/FVStorage.pdf>). For best quality, use zucchini within about 3 to 4 days.

Wash zucchini just before preparation. Zucchini makes a quick addition to meals as it doesn't have to be peeled!

Before you give your zucchini away, here are some suggestions plus **four recipes**:

Quick Tricks with Zucchini

The Produce for Better Health Foundation at www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org suggests:

- Slice, marinate (try balsamic vinegar) and grill a variety of vegetables including zucchini, asparagus, green onions, eggplant, and mushrooms. They're delicious!
- Cut up veggies like carrots, zucchini and potatoes. Add them to your favorite meatloaf or soup recipes.
- Take your favorite lasagna recipe and try adding different combinations of your favorite vegetables between the layers: mushrooms, spinach, broccoli, carrots, zucchini, onions, or eggplant. Be creative.

Additional tips include:

- Add raw zucchini to lettuce and pasta salads.
- Cut zucchini into sticks and serve with a dip.
- Slice zucchini, sauté in oil over medium heat for about 5 minutes until tender crisp; toss into heated pasta sauce for a veggie-packed pasta topping.



Freezing Zucchini

To freeze grated zucchini for baking, the National Center for Home Food Preservation recommends (http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/how/freeze/squash_summer.html):

Choose young tender zucchini. Wash and grate. Steam blanch (directions below) in small quantities 1 to 2 minutes until translucent. Pack in measured amounts into containers, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Cool by placing the containers in cold water. Seal and freeze. If watery when thawed, discard the liquid before using the zucchini.

To steam blanch zucchini: Use a pot with a tight lid and a basket that holds the food at least three inches above the bottom of the pot. Put an inch or two of water in the pot and bring the water to a boil. Put the vegetables in the basket in a single layer so that steam reaches all parts quickly. Cover the pot and keep heat high. Start counting steaming time as soon as the lid is on.

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Zucchini Recipes

Skillet Zucchini with Chopped Tomatoes

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Fruits and Veggies Matter Website at www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/index.html

Recipe Summary:

- Preparation Time: 10 minutes
- Number of Servings: 4
- Cups of Fruits and Vegetables Per Person: 1.0

Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon whipped light butter*
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 4 small (6-in/15cm) zucchini, thinly sliced
- 2 medium tomatoes, chopped
- freshly ground pepper

Directions:

In a large nonstick skillet, melt margarine 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.

***Alice's notes:** If you don't have whipped light butter, substitute a teaspoon of vegetable oil.

Tuna Pasta Salad

4 servings, about 1-1/2 cups each

Source: *Recipes and Tips for Healthy, Thrifty Meals*, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, at www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/FoodPlans/MiscPubs/FoodPlansRecipeBook.pdf

- 2 cups macaroni, uncooked
- 2 6-1/2 ounce cans tuna, canned, water-pack
- 1/2 cup zucchini, chopped
- 1/4 cup carrots, sliced
- 1/3 cup onion, diced
- 1/4 cup salad dressing, mayonnaise-type

1. Cook macaroni according to package directions. Drain.
2. Drain tuna.
3. Wash vegetables. Chop zucchini; slice carrots into thin slices; dice onions.
4. Mix macaroni, tuna, and vegetables together in mixing bowl. Stir in salad dressing.
5. Chill until ready to serve.

Alice's Notes: Drain and rinse the pasta under cold, running water until cool. To allow flavors to blend, chill the salad for about a half hour to an hour before serving.

Lemon Rosemary Zucchini

Makes 4 servings

Source: American Institute for Cancer Research (www.aicr.org) and featured in the revised edition of *The New American Plate*.

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1 medium yellow bell pepper, diced
- 2 teaspoons finely minced fresh rosemary
- 2 cups chopped zucchini (2 medium)
- 1-3 teaspoons freshly squeezed lemon juice, or to taste
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Instructions:

In medium non-stick skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add yellow pepper and rosemary and sauté 2 minutes. Add zucchini and salt and pepper, to taste. Continue to sauté for another 4 to 5 minutes or until zucchini is just tender. Remove from heat and stir in lemon juice.

Nutritional Information: Per serving: 46 calories, 3 g total fat (<1 g saturated fat), 4 g carbohydrate, 1 g protein, 1 g dietary fiber, 6 mg sodium.

Beef & Parmesan Pasta

Makes 4 servings

Source: Kaiti Roeder, RD, Nebraska Beef Council and Cattlemen's Beef Board and National Cattlemen's Beef Association - Beef, It's What's for Dinner. For more recipes made with zucchini, enter the word "zucchini" in the recipe search feature at these two Web addresses:

- www.nebeef.org/recipe_search.asp (NOTE: there is a _ between recipe and search in this address)
- www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com

Ingredients:

- 1-1/2 pounds ground beef
- 1 can (14 to 14-1/2 ounces) ready-to-serve beef broth
- 1 can (15-1/2 ounces) Italian-style diced tomatoes, undrained
- 2 cups uncooked bow tie pasta
- 2 cups sliced zucchini (1/4-inch)
- 3/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Instructions:

1. Brown ground beef in large nonstick skillet over medium heat 8 to 10 minutes or until beef is not pink, breaking up into 3/4-inch crumbles. Remove from skillet with slotted spoon; set aside. Pour off drippings.
2. Combine broth, tomatoes and pasta in same skillet, pushing pasta into liquid; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium; simmer, uncovered, 15 minutes, stirring frequently. Stir in zucchini; continue cooking 5 minutes or until pasta is tender.
3. Return beef to skillet. Stir in 1/2 cup of the cheese; heat through. Sprinkle with remaining 1/4 cup cheese before serving.