

Amazing Things To Do With Zucchini, Tomatoes, More

Zucchini and other types of summer squash are members of the Cucurbitaceae family along with melons and cucumbers. They are distinguished from their cousins known as winter squash butternut, acorn, hubbard, butternut and Turk's turban because they are harvested at a immature stage when the skin is still soft and edible. Squash are native to America and were introduced to European colonists by Native Americans.

Zucchini are mostly water and include few calories and minimal amounts of vitamins. However, according to the Wellness Encyclopedia of Food and Nutrition, they do provide small amounts of vitamin C and folacin. In combinations with other vegetables, they help you to include the recommended three to five servings of different vegetables in your diet each day. Zucchini sticks or slices can be enjoyed raw with dip or added to tossed salads. Sautéing or stir-frying zucchini alone or with other mild-flavored summer vegetables can be a quick and easy way to add them to your menu. They also are a tasty addition to tomato sauces or pasta dishes.

William Scapanysky, corporate chef for Kegel's Produce in Lancaster, has created these tasty recipes for "Simply Delicious" Pennsylvania zucchini.

SIMPLE SAUTEED ZUCCHINI

With only a few ingredients and about 15 minutes of work, this dish explodes with the bright tastes of summer. Serve warm as a wonderful accompaniment to lighter summer fare, chill to enjoy as a crisp, refreshing salad or combine with your favorite short pasta and a little prosciutto for a simple yet elegant main course dish.

3 each zucchini, ends removed, sliced 1/4-inch thick
 1/2 each onions, spanish, medium diced
 1/2 each peppers, red, seeded, medium diced
 2 tablespoons olive oil, extra virgin
 1 teaspoon salt, kosher
 1/2 teaspoon pepper, black, freshly ground
 12 each basil, leaves, rough chopped

In a large saute pan over medium-low heat, sweat onions in olive oil, without browning, until sweet and translucent. Add red

peppers and continue to cook until peppers are bright in color. Turn heat up and add zucchini. Season generously with salt and pepper. Toss well and saute until zucchini are al dente and just starting to brown on edges. Fold in freshly chopped basil. Makes 8-10 servings.

COOL ZUCCHINI SOUP WITH FRESH DILL

This soup is only finished with cream if desired at all and gets its otherwise creamy quality from the potato and onion thickened base. It is excellent served hot or cold. Try this technique with other vegetables in place of the zucchini, such as spinach or asparagus for other healthy options.

3 each zucchini, ends removed
 1/2 each onions, spanish, peeled, cut into chunks
 1 each potatoes, Russet peeled, cut into chunks
 6 cups stock, chicken or vegetable
 1 teaspoon salt, kosher
 1/2 teaspoon pepper, black, freshly ground
 1 bunch dill, fresh, top half of bunch
 Heavy cream, optional as needed
 Olive oil, extra virgin, optional as needed
 Sour cream, optional as needed
 Lemon, juice of, optional as needed

Place potatoes, onions, salt and pepper in a heavy bottomed stock pot that is large enough to hold all of the ingredients. Peel zucchini and save peelings for later. Add zucchini to pot. Add stock and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and continue to cook until all veggies are tender, approximately 45 minutes! Remove pot from heat and add zucchini peelings and dill. Immediately remove pot from stove and place into a sink filled with ice water in order to chill pot down rapidly and stop the cooking process. Once completely chilled, carefully puree in blender till smooth. Adjust seasonings with salt and pepper and serve as is or whisk in optional heavy or sour cream just before serving. Garnish with a dollop of low fat sour cream, a squeeze of lemon juice, a drizzle of olive oil, a few turns of the pepper mill and a sprig of dill if desired. Makes 8-10 servings.

STUFFED ZUCCHINI PROVENCAL

Excellent as an accompaniment to any entree and visually stunning on a buffet, these easy to make, packed full of flavor gems are sure to be a favorite! This preparation would be an ideal match for Rack of Lamb or other fuller flavored meats.

2 each zucchini, trimmed, cut into three 2-inch lengths ea
 1 each shallots, peeled and minced
 1/2 each tomato, beefsteak, small diced
 1 each garlic, clove, minced
 1/2 teaspoon thyme, fresh picked, leaves only
 3 each olives, Kalamata, pitted and chopped fine
 1/2 tablespoon wine, white, dry
 1/2 cup Panko or Japanese breadcrumbs
 1 tablespoon romano cheese, grated
 Salt, kosher as needed
 Pepper, black freshly ground as needed

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Using a small spoon or melon baller, carefully scoop out all but outside 1/4-inch of zucchini sides and bottom creating a cup. Reserve half of guts and chop small. Save the rest for other use. In a small saute pan, over medium heat, sweat shallots and garlic in olive oil till shallots are translucent and garlic is aromatic. Do not brown. Add reserved chopped zucchini guts and cook until soft. Add olives, tomatoes and thyme and increase heat. Saute briefly and deglaze with white wine. Simmer to cook off alcohol and remove from heat. Fold in breadcrumbs and cheese, reserving a tiny bit to sprinkle on top later. Gently mix and check for seasonings. Divide mixture evenly and stuff into zucchini cups. Return to same pan. Cover loosely with tin foil and bake at 400 degrees F for roughly 1 hour or till zucchini is just tender. Sprinkle tops with small amount of cheese and broil for 2 minutes, just until tops are lightly browned and crispy. Garnish with small sprig of fresh thyme leaves, some extra olives, and a drizzle of olive oil if desired.

Kenneth Ward, of Hulmeville, won first prize in the Pennsylvania "Simply Delicious" Vegetable Quick Bread contest for the following recipe at the 2001 Pennsylvania Fair at Philadelphia Park.

ZUCCHINI-BLUEBERRY BREAD

3 each eggs, room temperature
 1 cup oil
 2 cups sugar
 2 cup zucchini, grated
 3 teaspoon vanilla
 3 cups flour
 1 teaspoon salt
 1 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon baking powder
 3 teaspoons cinnamon
 dash nutmeg
 1/2 cup walnuts, chopped
 1 cup blueberries, fresh cleaned and dried

Beat eggs lightly. Add oil, sugar, zucchini and vanilla and mix lightly. Sift in dry ingredients. Blend in walnuts and blueberries. Pour into two greased 9x5-inch loaf pans and bake at 325 degrees F for 60 to 70 minutes or until done in the middle.

Charlene Aber of Columbia Cross Roads won first prize in the Pennsylvania "Simply Delicious" Vegetable Quick Bread contest for the following recipe at the 2001 Tioga County Fair.

PINEAPPLE-ZUCCHINI QUICK BREAD

3 eggs
 1 cup oil
 2 cups sugar
 3 teaspoons vanilla
 2 cups zucchini, grated, peeled
 13-ounce can pineapple, drained, crushed
 3 cups flour
 2 teaspoons soda
 1 teaspoon salt
 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
 1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon
 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
 1 cup raisins
 1 cup nuts, chopped
 Mix eggs, oil, sugar and vanilla together until thick and creamy. Spoon in the zucchini. Add the remaining ingredients and mix. Pour into two greased 9x5-inch loaf pans and bake at 350 degrees F for 1 hour.

Leading food and medical authorities recommend eating three to five servings of vegetable each day. Fresh tomatoes provide an excellent source of vitamins and minerals. In fact, one medium tomato supplies over 40 percent of the daily allowance of vitamin C and 20 percent of vitamin A plus potassium — All with only 35 calories.

William Scapanysky, corporate chef for Kegel's Produce in Lancaster, has created the dried tomato recipe:

EASY OVEN DRIED TOMATOES

These tomatoes are cooked slowly, for a long period of time, concentrating the natural sugars and intensifying the ripe tomato flavor. Excellent as a side dish or added to pastas or pizza creations.

12 Roma tomatoes, large and ripe
 1 teaspoon Kosher salt
 1/2 teaspoon granulated sugar
 1/2 teaspoon 5 Peppercorn Blend, freshly ground

1/2 teaspoon rosemary, fresh, chopped fine

1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil
 Preheat oven to 275 degrees F. Halve tomatoes lengthwise and trim off core. Place tomatoes in a large non-reactive bowl and add remaining ingredients. Toss well and place tomatoes, cut side up on a roasting rack over a baking sheet. Place in middle of the oven. Slowly roast until tomatoes are semi dried and beginning to brown on the edges. Serve hot or cold! Makes six-eight servings.

The following recipe by Patricia Schry of Elwood City won first prize in the "Simply Delicious" Vegetable Quick Bread Contest at the 2001 Hookstown Fair:

TOMATO ONION BACON BREAD

1 pound (1 1/2 to 1 3/4 cups) tomatoes - peeled and seeded
 3 eggs
 2 cups sugar
 1 cup oil
 1 cup buttermilk
 4 cups flour
 2 teaspoons baking powder
 2 teaspoons baking soda
 1 teaspoon salt
 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
 1 onion - large, chopped and caramelized with 1 teaspoon salt added
 4 slices bacon - cut fine, cooked well done
 2 tablespoons basil - fresh, cut fine
 1 tablespoon parsley - fresh, cut fine

Process tomatoes in food processor for one minute. Add eggs and sugar and process one minute. Add oil and process one minute. Add buttermilk and process one minute. Add dry ingredients and pulse four times. Add caramelized onion, bacon, basil and parsley and pulse two times. Fill a 9x5-inch and 4x5-inch bread pan. Bake at 350 degrees F. for one hour for 9x5-inch pan and 32 minutes for 4x5-inch pan.

Pickle Is More

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half. Remove spice bag. Fill hot sterile jars with hot mixture, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Adjust lids and process half-pints or pints for 5 minutes.

SPICY MELON CANTALOUPE PICKLES

3 cups sugar
 2 cups water
 2 sticks cinnamon
 2 teaspoons whole cloves
 1 teaspoon whole allspice
 1 teaspoon slivered whole nutmeg
 13 cups 1-inch cantaloupe cubes or balls
 4 1/2 cups sugar

Combine vinegar and water in a large saucepan. Tie spices in a spice bag and add to vinegar mixture. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer five minutes. Remove from heat. Add melon, let stand 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Add sugar to melon mixture. Bring to a boil, stirring sugar to dissolve. Reduce heat and simmer 45 minutes or until cantaloupe becomes slightly transparent. Pack hot melon into hot jars, leaving 1/4-inch headspace. Ladle hot pickling liquid over melon, leaving 1/4-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Adjust two-piece lid. Process 10 minutes in boiling water canner.

Yield: about 7 half pints.



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