

From the Food Bank Kitchen

Zucchini and Summer Squash

Zucchini and summer squash are abundant in July and August. *There is so much one can make with these low in carbohydrate, high fiber, low calorie veggies; 1/2 cup contains only 13 calories! In recipes, summer squash and zucchini can be substituted for one another. They can be a main ingredient of entrees, or used in a variety of side dishes, including quick breads or salads. Tomato sauce and cheese go well with them; they also pair well with a wide variety of herbs and spices. Their high water content helps with hydration. Squashes are a great source of vitamin C, beta carotene (vitamin A), potassium, and B-vitamins. Vitamins A and C are antioxidants that support immune health and help keep skin healthy. They taste great cooked or raw. Cut into sticks raw, they make a perfect snack for dipping. Eating vegetables raw maintains nutrient value, as some vitamins are lost during cooking.*

Purchasing and Using Summer Squash and Zucchini:

Purchasing: Look for a zucchini or summer squash that is firm and heavy for its size, with glossy, undamaged skin. While it might be tempting to take a very large squash, these often have tougher skin. The most flavorful summer squashes are usually about 6 to 8 inches long.

Storing and Preparation: Keep fresh squash in the refrigerator for up to a week. Make sure to wash well and cut off ends before eating. They do not need to be peeled to be eaten. Freezing may make the texture mushy. If freezing, cut into slices and blanch in simmering water for 2 minutes, drain, and freeze. Frozen squash should last 3-4 months.

Cooking: Cut squash into about 1/2 inch thick slices. *To boil:* fill pot with enough water to cover the squash, remove squash, and bring to a boil. Add squash and maintain a boil. Cook, uncovered, 1 to 3 minutes, or until just soft. *To steam:* place cut squash in a steamer basket over a layer of boiling water and simmer covered for 2 to 3 minutes.

Squash can be baked, stuffed, sautéed, braised, fried in batter or crumbs, roasted, grilled, and used in casseroles, quiches, and omelets. To grill, slice lengthwise into about 1/2 inch wide pieces, marinate in Italian dressing for about 15 minutes, then grill until fork-tender. Cooked squash has a mild flavor, so try adding garlic and/or onion and dried herbs (dill, basil or rosemary), lemon juice or lemon pepper, or spices like nutmeg, chili powder, or curry. Try baking a zucchini quick bread with grated zucchini; some recipes include chopped apples and/or nuts. You can also cook zucchini or summer squash in the microwave oven.

Microwave: Cut 2 squashes into 1/4 inch thick slices. Arrange in a microwave-safe baking dish. Add 3 tablespoons of water and any desired seasonings; cover. Cook on full power 4 to 7 minutes or until tender, stirring halfway through.

Zucchini Fries

Serves 8

Adapted from damndelicious.net

- 2 large zucchini or summer squash, unpeeled
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 c grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 c Panko or other bread crumbs*
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning

Nutrition Facts: Calories 70, Fat 3 gm, Saturated Fat 2 gm, Sodium 400 mg, Carbohydrate 7 gm, Fiber 1 gm, Protein 5 gm

* If desired, substitute for bread crumbs 1/2 cup of crushed almonds or dry-roasted peanuts.

Directions: Preheat oven to 425°F. Coat a wire cooling rack with nonstick spray and place on a baking sheet; set aside. Cut zucchini into quarters lengthwise, then into about 4 inch long pieces (cut smaller if desired—cooking time may decrease with smaller fries). Beat eggs in a shallow bowl. In a separate shallow bowl or dish, mix together bread crumbs, Parmesan cheese and Italian seasoning; season with salt and pepper to taste. Dip each zucchini piece into beaten egg and roll in the bread crumb-cheese coating. Place coated fries on the cooling rack on top of a baking sheet, and bake in a preheated oven until zucchini are tender and the coating is crisp and browned, about 20-25 minutes.

See next page for more recipes

For even more nutrition tips, see <http://www.foodbankwma.org/what-we-do/nutrition/nutrition-tips/>

Summer Squash Sauté

Makes 5 servings

- 1½ lbs summer squash or zucchini (about 3 medium squash)
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 Tbsp Parmesan cheese, grated
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- ½ tsp salt

Nutrition Facts: Calories 80, Fat 6 gm, Saturated Fat 1 gm, Sodium 250 mg, Carbohydrate 5 gm, Fiber 2 gm, Protein 2 gm

Directions: Cut squash in half crosswise, then cut each half into 4 lengthwise sticks. Heat oil in a heavy nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add oregano and garlic, and sauté for about 2 minutes. Add squash, salt and pepper, and sauté for about 3 minutes until squash is lightly browned. Mix in Parmesan cheese. Serve warm.

Recipe adapted from Everyday Healthy Meals, California Dept. of Public Health

Zucchini Tomato Bake

Makes 6 servings

Source: Adapted from health.com

A simple meal, this zucchini tomato bake capitalizes on summer produce!

- 2 medium zucchini
- 1½ c corn kernels, frozen, canned, or fresh
- 3 medium tomatoes
- ½ cup Panko or other bread crumbs
- ¼ c grated parmesan cheese
- ½ tsp salt
- Black pepper to taste

Nutrition Facts: Calories 100, Fat 2 gm, Sodium 270 mg, Carbohydrate 17 gm, Fiber 2 gm, Protein 4 gm

Directions: Preheat oven to 400°F. Coat a 2-quart shallow baking dish with cooking spray, and alternately layer sliced zucchini, corn kernels, and sliced tomatoes. Combine bread crumbs, Parmesan, salt, and pepper, and sprinkle on top. Cover with foil and bake in the center of oven 30 minutes. Remove foil and continue to bake until top is golden brown and vegetables are tender. Serve hot.

Zucchini with Corn & Cilantro

Makes 4 servings

Source: Adapted from health.com

- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 3 zucchini or summer squash (about 1 lb), cubed
- 1 c corn kernels, frozen, canned, or fresh
- 1 Tbsp fresh cilantro, chopped (optional)
- 1 tsp lime juice (optional)
- ½ tsp salt
- ⅛ tsp black pepper

Nutrition Facts: Calories 80, Fat 4 gm, Sodium 300 mg, Carbohydrate 10 gm, Fiber 2 gm, Protein 2 gm

Directions: Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add zucchini and corn; cook, stirring occasionally, 7 to 8 minutes or until zucchini/squash is crisp-tender. Remove from heat, and stir in cilantro and remaining ingredients.

Zucchini Butter

Makes 16 (2 Tbsp) servings

Source: thekitchn.com

This is a recipe that can use up a lot of extra zucchini! Try this bright green zucchini 'jam' on toast or as a side dish.

- 2 lb zucchini (about 4-6 medium zucchini)
- ¼ c olive oil (or butter, if you prefer)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced (optional: add 2 minced shallots)
- ½ tsp salt; ground black pepper to taste

Directions: Grate zucchini and let it drain in a colander for 3-4 minutes. Squeeze out any extra water. Heat oil in a pan and add garlic (and shallots if using). After 1 to 2 minutes, add zucchini and toss. Stir in salt and add pepper to taste. Cook and stir over medium heat; turn down heat if bottom is scorching. Cook until the mixture has cooked down considerably and has reached a spreadable consistency.

Nutrition Facts: Calories 40, Fat 4 gm, Sodium 75 mg, Carbohydrate 2 gm, Fiber 1 gm, Protein 1 gm