

FOOD FOR FITNESS AND FUN

August - 2007

As I turn the calendar to August, I realize summer is almost over! But there is still time to savor some of the great flavors from the garden and keep your food safe while the thermometer soars. Enjoy! Jan Temple

ENJOY ALL THE ZUCCHINI!

Zucchini is very low in calories (more than 95 percent water) and a good source of vitamin C, fiber, potassium and magnesium. The green skinned variety is a source of carotenoid pigment that helps protect against cataracts and macular degeneration. So, be sure to eat the tender skin on the zucchini! When choosing zucchini, pick firm, slender squash that are free of soft spots or wrinkled skin. For best quality, choose those that are 6 to 8 inches long and not more than 2 inches in diameter. Larger zucchini are better suited to baking. Store them in the refrigerator and wash just before preparing.



Alice Henneman, MS, RD, University of Nebraska Extension, says, "**August 8** is known in some circles as '**Sneak Some Zucchini onto Your Neighbor's Porch Day.**'" Before you try to give (or sneak!) your zucchini away, here are lower calorie suggestions for using it.

FREEZING:

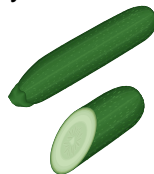
Wash and grate zucchini. Steam blanch (directions follow) in small quantities 1 to 2 minutes until translucent. Pack in measured amounts into containers, leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Cool by placing the containers in cold water. Seal and freeze. If watery when thawed, discard the liquid before using the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

To steam blanch zucchini: Use a pot with a tight lid and a basket that holds the food at least 3 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.

Source: National center for Home Food Preservation

RAW: ZUCCHINI BITES

Sprinkle zucchini slices with garlic powder OR combine garlic powder and Parmesan cheese.



GRILLED: ZUCCHINI SPEARS

Enjoy zucchini on the grill. Cut zucchini into spears and brush with fat free Italian dressing and grill using direct heat until golden brown – about 10-15 minutes total.

BAKED: ZUCCHINI MUFFINS – SERVES 12

1 1/2 cups white whole wheat flour	1/2 cup sugar
1 1/2 tsp. baking powder	1/4 cup Splenda
1/4 tsp. baking soda	3 Tbsp. vegetable oil
1 tsp. cinnamon	1 cup fat free milk
1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg	1 1/2 cups grated zucchini
1/4 cup egg whites	

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Spray muffin tins with non-stick cooking spray. In large bowl, stir together flour, baking powder, baking soda and spices. In a medium bowl, beat egg whites slightly and stir in sugar, Splenda, oil and zucchini. Add to flour mixture stirring just until combined. Fill muffin cups 2/3 full. Bake for about 18 minutes or until tops are lightly browned. Allow to cool for 5 minutes and then turn out of pan. Serve warm or refrigerate or freeze for later use.

Each muffin: 130 calories, 3.7 g fat, 0.4 g saturated fat, 0 trans fat; 0 mg cholesterol, 87 mg sodium, 22.8 g carbohydrate, 2.2 g fiber, 2.9 g protein.

Source: Communicating Food for Health.com/recipe

COLD: ZUCCHINI COLESLAW – SERVES 6

2 cups coarsely shredded zucchini	1/2 cup thinly sliced radishes (optional)
2 cups shredded cabbage	1/3 cup mayonnaise, lowfat
1 medium shredded carrot	1/3 cup mild salsa
2 sliced green onions	

Drain zucchini by pressing between layers of paper towels. Put zucchini in a large bowl; add cabbage, carrot, onions and radishes. In a small bowl, combine remaining ingredients. Pour over vegetables and toss well. Cover and chill at least one hour before serving.

Each serving: 70 calories, 4.5 g fat, 0.5 g saturated fat, 0 trans fat; 5 mg cholesterol, 160 mg sodium, 6 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 1 g protein.

Source: U of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service

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HOT: ZESTY SKILLET ZUCCHINI SERVES 6

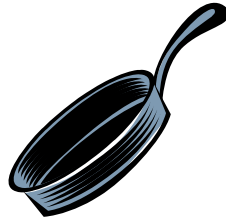
1/2 cup low sodium V-8*	1 cup canned mushrooms, drained
1/4 tsp. black pepper	2 medium zucchini squash, sliced thin
1 medium onion, chopped	1 tsp. basil
1 medium tomato, chopped	

**Product endorsement not implied.*

Put the tomato juice and pepper in a skillet or pan. Cook on high heat for 3 minutes. Add the onion, tomato, and mushrooms. Reduce heat to medium high. Cover and cook for 5 minutes. Add zucchini; cover and cook for another 5 to 7 minutes. Eat hot 'as is' or serve over noodles or rice.

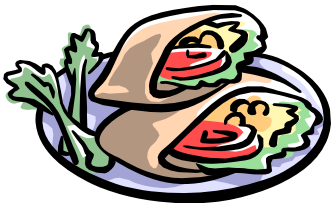
Each serving: 40 calories, 0 g fat, 0 g saturated fat, 0 trans fat; 0 mg cholesterol, 130 mg sodium, 8 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 2 g protein.

Source: Pennsylvania Nutrition Education Program



STUFFED: VEGGIE PITA – SERVES 12

2 medium zucchini (2 1/2 cups chopped)	1/4 tsp. black pepper
4 medium carrots (1 1/4 cups grated)	1/4 tsp. garlic powder
2 cups chopped broccoli florets	1/4 tsp. onion powder
12 oz. low fat cheddar cheese, grated	2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
1/2 tsp. oregano	12-6 inch mini-pitas



Measure oregano, pepper, garlic powder, onion powder and mix together. Heat oil in a skillet. Put the spices in the heated oil and then

add all the vegetables to the pan. Stir vegetables and sauté about 5 minutes. When the vegetables are slightly tender, remove from heat. Spoon the vegetable mixture into the 12 pitas. Top each pita with 1 ounce of grated cheese.

Each serving: 250 calories, 5 g fat, 1.5 g saturated fat, 0 trans fat; 5 mg cholesterol, 510 mg sodium, 37 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 13 g protein.

Source: University of Illinois Extension Service

TIPS TO PACK A SAFE LUNCH

- Always keep it clean. Wash your hands with warm water and soap, and use hot, soapy water to make sure food preparation surfaces and utensils are clean. Teach your children to wash their hands with warm water and soap before they eat.
- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water and blot dry with a paper towel before packing them in your lunch.
- Insulated, soft-sided lunch totes are best for keeping perishable food cold, but metal or plastic lunch boxes and paper bags can also be used. If using paper lunch bags, create layers by double bagging to help insulate the food. A cold source, such as a small frozen gel pack or frozen juice box, should be packed with perishable food in any type of lunch bag. After lunch, discard all used food packaging and paper bags. Do not reuse paper or plastic bags.
- Freezer gel packs will keep foods cold until lunchtime, but are not recommended for all-day storage.
- Any perishable food (such as meat, poultry, egg sandwiches, fresh-cut fruits and vegetables) not eaten at lunch should be thrown away.
- If you make sandwiches the night before, keep them in the refrigerator until packing time.
- When making cold sandwiches, start with all cold ingredients – filling, bread and toppings. If you will be making a protein based filling, make sure all the ingredients for that are cold when mixed together. Example – if making tuna salad put the can of tuna along with the mayonnaise and all other ingredients in the refrigerator for several hours so it is cold when combined with other ingredients. If you will be adding hard cooked eggs, make sure they are thoroughly chilled before adding. The goal: keep all food OUT of the danger zone - 40 to 140 degrees.
- Try to plan just the right amount of food to take so you won't have to worry about the storage or safety of leftovers.



Source: Fightbac.org: Partnership for Food Safety Education

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