

Use & Enjoy Zucchini

Prepared by:

University of California Cooperative Extension
in San Joaquin County
420 S. Wilson Way, Stockton, CA 95205
Telephone (209) 468-2085

The home vegetable grower may find that his string beans become stunted, his tomatoes have worms, and that gophers may have gotten his peppers, but one vegetable that he can be sure of for at least some production is zucchini. In fact, most zucchini plants over-produce, and the thrifty home gardener is at a loss as to what to do with all this zucchini.

Zucchini is a member of the soft-shelled, small, immature squashes that are to be found primarily in the summer months from local suppliers and in home gardens, and during the winter months our supply is shipped in from Mexico. These squash are generally harvested when about half-grown before their seeds become hard. Zucchini, Italian squash, Grazzini or Long squash, as it is called, is cylindrical-cone shaped with fairly square, abrupt ends. The meat color is creamy, but a network of green gives it an appearance of light and dark stripes or ridges. The size may vary from very small to jumbo, which means one to two feet long.

The Italian marrow squash is very similar to the varieties of zucchini mentioned above. It may be solid dark green or have alternating stripes of dark greenish-black and yellow. It is also called "Cocozelle."

Some of the other varieties of summer squash are Yellow Crookneck and Yellow Straightneck, which usually are 6 to 8 inches long, and the Scallop or Patty Pan, with a pale green bowl-shape.

The zucchini is the most common variety raised in the home garden. Whether you grow or buy zucchini for general use, look for small young squash that are heavy for their size—these are the choicest. The skin should be tender enough to yield easily to thumb pressure. Refrigerate and plan to use them within a few days. Of course, the fresher the squash, the tastier!

Most recipes for zucchini may be adapted to fit other soft-shell squash, except where shape enters into the recipe.

To prepare for general use, scrub gently in cold water with a soft vegetable brush. Cut a slice from each end. Do not remove skin or seeds of squash if tender and young.

Some of these recipes are from Mary Mazzia, sister of Tony Ciampi, long time vegetable grower in the Santa Barbara area.

Suggestions for Use

Cook in saucepan or fry pan over medium heat, in one-inch boiling salted water or steam. Cover and cook halved squash about 5 minutes; sliced squash, 3 minutes. Cook with garlic, onion, sesame seed, seasoned salt and pepper—never overcook. Serve as a vegetable or use in recipe for stews, casseroles and main dishes, such as included in this leaflet.

Zucchini is often cooked with tomatoes, onions and peppers. A quick way to fix this dish is to bring a can of seasoned tomatoes to a boil, add salt and herbs to taste—slice in zucchini, return to a boil, turn off heat and let stand until ready to serve.

Another serving suggestion is to parboil zucchini split lengthwise until barely tender. Drain and scoop out marrow. Mix the marrow with seasoned bread crumbs, a little lemon, salt and better with some chopped parsley and oregano. Return filling to squash. Top with Parmesan cheese and dot with butter. Broil until it is a soft golden brown.

It can be used raw in salads, as an appetizer, or cut in sticks and served with dips. A half-cup of cooked plain zucchini contains about 14 calories. They are a good source of Vitamin C and low in sodium.

Jam

3½ cups peeled and chopped zucchini

3 cups sugar

½ cup lemon juice

1 6-oz package Raspberry Jello

Combine zucchini and lemon juice in saucepan and simmer until tender. Add sugar and Jello and boil for 6 minutes. Pour into containers and refrigerate. (Keep refrigerated.) DO NOT FREEZE.

Zucchini Salad Bowl

3 cups zucchini	2 tablespoons mince onion
1 cup cooked string beans	1 tomato (medium) peeled and cut into small pieces
1 cup chopped celery	½ teaspoon oregano leaf
½ bell pepper chopped	1 teaspoon seasoning salt

Peel and remove pulp from overgrown zucchini. Shred to make 3 cups. Add all ingredients in large bowl, add your favorite dressing and mix well. Chill for one hour and serve.

Low-Cal Zucchini Salad

2 cups grated zucchini	1 32-oz can low-cal fruit cocktail
1 cup grated carrots	1 cup cocktail marshmallows
½ cup chopped celery	

Mix all ingredients except marshmallows in bowl. Allow to stand for one hour. Drain liquid, add marshmallows and 2 cups of your favorite low-cal whipping cream. Fold gently, garnish with strawberries and serve.

Zucchini Omelet (Frittata)

(4 servings)

3 cups water	¼ teaspoon freshly grated lemon peel
½ teaspoon salt	¼ teaspoon salt
1 cup diced unpeeled fresh zucchini	pinch of salt
2 tablespoons fresh bread crumbs	4 eggs
3 tablespoons milk	2 tablespoons butter
4 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese	Use herbs such as oregano or thyme for seasoning

Preheat the broiler to a high setting. Bring the water and salt to a bubbling boil in a small saucepan. Drop in the diced zucchini and blanch it for 3 minutes, then drain thoroughly in a large sieve or colander. In a large mixing bowl, soak the breadcrumbs in the milk, then stir in the zucchini, grated cheese, lemon peel, salt and sugar. In another bowl, beat the eggs with a whisk or fork until they are just blended, then stir them gently into the breadcrumb-and-zucchini mixture. Melt the butter in a heavy 10-inch skillet. When hot, pour in the egg-and-zucchini mixture and cook over moderate heat for 2 or 3 minutes, or until the eggs are firm, but still slightly moist. Slide the skillet under the broiler for 30 seconds to brown the top lightly. Slice the frittata into wedges and serve at once.

Supreme Zucchini Omelet

3 strips lean bacon or equivalent of ham (chopped)	½ teaspoon pepper
1 tablespoon chopped onion	3 eggs, well beaten
½ cup grated mild cheese	1 cup grated zucchini

Sauté bacon or ham to golden brown. Add onions and sauté for one minute. Add zucchini, sauté for ½ minute and add grated cheese and eggs. Cook to taste.

Zucchini Bread

3 eggs	1 teaspoon baking soda
2 cups sugar	¼ teaspoon baking powder
1 cup oil	1 teaspoon salt
3 teaspoons vanilla	3 teaspoons cinnamon
2 cups peeled and grated zucchini	2/3 cup chopped nuts
3 cups flour	

Beat eggs until light and foamy. Add sugar, oil, vanilla, and zucchini and mix well. In separate bowl, sift together: flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, cinnamon. Blend together and add chopped nuts. Pour into 2 greased loaf pans and bake at 325° F oven for 1 hour (or more) until done. Remove at once. Freeze when cool.

Zucchini Bread

Beat together:

5 eggs

3 cups sugar

2 cups oil

4 cups grated zucchini (peeled & uncooked)

Add and mix:

4 cups flour

4 teaspoons vanilla

4 teaspoons baking soda

4 teaspoons cinnamon

½ teaspoon baking powder

2 cups chopped nuts

2 teaspoons salt

Small loaf pans: Bake 40 minutes in a 350° oven. Makes 8 small loaves. Large loaf pans: Bake 1 hour in a 350° oven. Makes 2 large loaves. Freezes well.

Zucchini Turta

4 medium zucchini

6 eggs

1 bunch fresh parsley

¾ cup grated Parmesan cheese

4 cloves garlic

breadcrumbs

1 medium onion

paprika (optional)

1 teaspoon Italian seasoning

salt and pepper to taste

Slice zucchini in processor. Sauté in a little oil in a fry pan until limp. Cool. Sauté chopped onion until translucent. Add chopped parsley, garlic, and Italian seasoning. Sauté until limp, but not brown. Cool. Beat eggs. Mix all ingredients together. If too liquid, add a few breadcrumbs. Pour into 9" x 13" oiled casserole. Sprinkle with paprika. Bake at 350° or until set – approximately 45 minutes. Zucchini may be substituted with chopped, parboiled spinach or Swiss chard. Be sure to squeeze all liquid out of spinach or Swiss chard.

Zucchini Cake

4 cups sifted flour	3 teaspoons baking powder
3 cups sugar	2 teaspoons cinnamon
1 cup brown sugar	1 teaspoon salt
3 teaspoons baking soda	

Sift all of the above ingredients together.

5 eggs	2 teaspoons rum
1¼ cups vegetable oil	1 orange rind, grated
2 cups grated zucchini	1 cup chopped walnuts
1 banana, mashed	

Beat eggs until foamy. Add oil and beat for a few seconds. Add zucchini, banana and orange rind, beating well after each addition. Mix dry ingredients. Add rum and walnuts. Grease and flour cake pan or 3 small loaf pans. Spoon batter into pan and spread evenly. Bake in 350° oven for approximately 40 minutes, or until a wooden toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.

Ratatouille

(8-10 servings)

(Tastes better made ahead and is just as good cold as reheated.)

½ cup olive oil	2 teaspoons salt
2 large onions, sliced	1 teaspoon basil
2 large cloves garlic, minced or mashed	½ cup minced parsley
1 medium-sized eggplant (cut in ½-inch cubes)	4 large tomatoes, cut in chunks
6 medium-sized zucchini, thickly sliced crosswise	parsley
2 green or red bell peppers, seeded and cut in chunks	

Heat ¼ cup oil in a large frying pan over high heat. Add onions and garlic and cook, stirring until onions are soft, but not browned. Stir in the eggplant, zucchini, peppers, salt, basil and minced parsley. Add a little of the oil as needed to keep the vegetables from sticking. Cover pan and cook over moderate heat for 30 minutes; stir occasionally, using a large spatula and turning the vegetables frequently. If the mixture becomes soupy, remove cover. Add tomatoes and stir. Cover and cook for 15 minutes; stir occasionally. Ratatouille should

have a little free liquid, but still be a good spoon-and-serve consistency. Serve hot, chilled, at room temperature or reheated. Garnish with parsley and tomato.

Ratatouille in the Oven

Using the vegetables and seasonings in the previous recipe, layer all ingredients into a 6-quart casserole. Drizzle only 4 tablespoons of the olive oil over the top layer. Cover casserole and bake in a 350° oven for 3 hours. Baste the top occasionally with some of the liquid. Uncover during the last hour if soupy. Mix gently and salt to taste. Garnish with parsley and tomato.

Savory Zucchini

(4 servings)

1 pound zucchini	4 teaspoons beef stock base
2 tablespoons butter or margarine	1/3 cup water
1 tablespoon instant minced onions	

Wash zucchini and cut in half. Slice thinly lengthwise; then cut each thin slice into match-like sticks. Heat butter in clean, large heavy frying pan. Add onion, stock base and water. Stir to mix and add zucchini. Cook quickly over high heat, turning frequently. Cook only until zucchini is crisp-tender and liquid is absorbed – not more than 5 minutes. Serve immediately.

Rice-Stuffed Zucchini

(8 servings)

1 7- or 8-oz package chicken flavored rice mix	½ cup shredded natural Meunster cheese
4 medium zucchini (about 2¼ pounds)	salt to taste
1 small tomato	

Prepare rice mix as label directs. In a large saucepan over medium-high heat, heat 6 cups water and 1½ teaspoons salt to boiling. Cut zucchini in half lengthwise; add to water and cook over medium heat 5 to 7 minutes until just tender-crisp. Immediately drain and cool zucchini under running cold water. Preheat oven to 375°. Scoop out and discard seeds from zucchini halves, leaving shells about ¼ to ½ inch thick. In greased 13" x 9" baking dish, arrange zucchini halves crosswise in a row; sprinkle with salt. Pile rice into zucchini halves; top each with some tomato and cheese. Bake 10 minutes or until cheese melts and rice is heated through.

Zucchini with Sour Cream & Mushrooms

(4-6 servings)

1 pound mushrooms	dill seed
¼ cup butter	1 clove garlic
1 pound zucchini	2 tablespoons flour
salt	1 cup sour cream

Sauté mushrooms 4 to 6 minutes in butter. Scrape a pound of small zucchini; cut into one-inch crosswise slices, and cook them gently in salted water (to which some dill seed and garlic have been added). When zucchini is just tender, drain it well (save the liquid). Dab with a paper towel to remove any excess moisture. To the mushrooms, add 2 tablespoons of flour, cook 2 minutes more. Then add a cup of sour cream and the squash. Add a little of the squash water and season. Cook until the vegetables are just hot.

Zucchini Cockaigne

(4 servings)

3 cups zucchini (cut into small pieces)

Simmer the squash, covered, until tender, for about 6 to 8 minutes in a small amount of boiling water. Shake the pan to keep from sticking. Drain well.

Combine:

¼ cup cultured sour cream	½ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon butter	1/8 teaspoon paprika
1 tablespoon grated cheese	

Stir this mixture over low heat until the cheese is melted. Remove it from heat.

Stir in:

1 beaten egg yolk	1 tablespoon chopped chives
-------------------	-----------------------------

Add the squash. Place the mixture in a baking dish. Cover the top with dry bread crumbs, dots of butter and grated cheese. Brown it in a heated oven at 375°.

Low-Cal Spaghetti (Made with Extra Large Zucchini)

6 cups grated zucchini (in place of spaghetti)

Sauce for above:

2 onions, sliced thin	¼ cup tomato paste
1 clove garlic, mashed	1 teaspoon seasoning salt
¼ cup vegetable oil	1 teaspoon basil
½ pound lean ground beef	½ teaspoon pepper
3 cups tomato sauce	1 tablespoon sugar

Brown onion and garlic in oil. Add meat and brown slowly. Heat tomato sauce and paste in deep kettle. Add meat mixture, seasoning and sugar, and simmer 2½ to 3 hours. Preparing zucchini: Peel zucchini, cut in half and halve again. Remove pulp and grate zucchini. In a glass baking pan approximately 12" x 15", spread ½ cup of sauce. Add 3 cups zucchini; spread evenly in pan. Sprinkle ¼ cup Parmesan cheese and ¼ cup grated mild cheese. Spread 1½ cups sauce over above. Repeat with another layer of zucchini, cheeses and sauce. Bake 12 minutes in a 300° oven.

Zucchini Casserole (6 servings)

4 to 6 medium zucchini	¼ cup chopped parsley
1 teaspoon salt	¼ cup packaged biscuit mix
1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese	4 eggs, well beaten
1/8 teaspoon pepper	approximately 1 tablespoon butter or margarine
1/8 teaspoon garlic powder	

Shred enough of the unpeeled zucchini to make 4 cups lightly packed into the cup. Turn into a bowl and mix in the salt; let stand 1 hour. Turn into a colander and press out liquid. Combine zucchini, cheese, pepper, garlic powder, parsley, and biscuit mix. Stir in the beaten eggs until well blended. Place in a well-greased 9-inch square-baking pan. Dot the top with butter. Bake uncovered in a 350° oven for 25 minutes or until the mixture is set. Serve hot. Garnish with olive slices.

Hamburger-Zucchini Casserole

(4 servings)

4-5 medium zucchini, sliced	¾ teaspoon salt
½ pound hamburger	½ teaspoon pepper
1 medium onion, chopped	1 teaspoon chili powder
2 or 3 fresh tomatoes (or ½ to 1 cup canned tomatoes)	1 teaspoon oregano

Brown onion and meat. Add zucchini, tomatoes, and enough water to keep from sticking. Add remaining ingredients; stir. Cook over medium heat for 20 to 25 minutes. If desired, add ¼ cup vermouth 5 minutes before serving.

Zucchini Patties

(6 servings)

5 medium-sized zucchini	2 tablespoons flour
3 eggs	½ cup finely chopped parsley
1 tablespoon grated Parmesan cheese	1 teaspoon each of salt and pepper
1 - 2 cloves garlic, minced or mashed	½ cup olive oil or salad oil

Scrub zucchini; remove both ends, but do not peel. Coarsely shred the zucchini into a bowl; press out and remove the water. Mix the dry zucchini with the unbeaten eggs, Parmesan cheese, garlic, flour, parsley, salt and pepper. Meanwhile, heat a small amount of oil in a frying pan. Use a tablespoon to shape heaping spoonfuls of the zucchini mixture into patties. Sauté in the hot oil until lightly browned on both sides.

Zucchini Soup

Sauté 1 chopped onion in vegetable oil. Add approximately 2 pounds of cut up zucchini (do not peel) and continue to sauté – about 10 minutes. Add water to cover, a sprig of fresh tarragon or dill, and salt to taste. Bring to boil. Simmer for 20 - 25 minutes, until the squash is soft. Put through food blender and serve with a dab of yogurt or sour cream, cold or hot. Soup may be thinned by adding more water or chicken stock to taste.

Zucchini Soup

2 10½-oz. cans consommé soup	3 cloves garlic (whole)
2 soup cans water	1 onion (whole)
½ pound ham hock or bacon	dash of Worcestershire sauce
3 pounds zucchini (whole)	salt and pepper to taste

Place all ingredients in large pot; simmer for 1 hour and then put through blender or food processor. Good to freeze.

Freezing

Coarsely grate zucchini in long strands and freeze on a cookie sheet. When it is frozen, crumble and place in plastic freezer containers. It is excellent to add to soups and stews as needed.

In accordance with applicable state and federal laws and University policy, the University of California does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, medical condition (cancer-related), ancestry, marital status, citizenship, sexual orientation, or status as a Vietnam-era veteran or special disabled veteran. Inquiries regarding this policy may be addressed to the Affirmative Action Director, University of California, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, 1111 Franklin St., 6th Floor, Oakland, CA 94607-5200. (510) 987-0631.

Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture, University of California and San Joaquin County Cooperating