

This week, we are going to dive into Zucchini!

The most flavorful zucchini is small-to-medium size and is technically a fruit (because it comes from a flower) but used as a vegetable.

It is part of the squash family: 95% water, high in vitamin C, A, and fiber, and has more potassium than a banana. All of these reasons make zucchini great tasting, has multiple uses, and is a low-calorie snack!!

Grilled Bacon, Egg and Cheese Zucchini Boats

Level: Easy

Total: 25 min.

Inactive: 25 min.

Servings: 4

2 med. zucchinis
1 T. olive oil
Kosher salt and black pepper
1/4 C. extra-sharp shredded Cheddar
1/4 C. grated Havarti cheese
1/4 C. finely chopped fresh chives
1/4 C. heavy cream
4 lg. eggs
1 clove garlic, grated
4 strips bacon

Prepare a grill for medium-high indirect heat: (The grill should be around 400 degrees F. Be sure to consult the grill manufacturer's guide for the best results.)

Slice the zucchinis down the middle, lengthwise like a hotdog, so that you have 4 long, equal pieces of zucchini. Use a teaspoon to remove the flesh of the zucchini, being sure to leave a 1/4-inch border and to not pierce the bottom of the zucchini. Finely chop 1/2 C. of the zucchini flesh and discard or save the remainder for another use. Place the chopped zucchini flesh into a clean kitchen towel and wring out as much liquid as possible. Place the zucchini flesh into a medium liquid measuring cup or bowl.

Flip the zucchini boats over so that the peel side is facing up and brush all four pieces with olive oil. Season the peel side with 1/4 tsp. salt and a few grinds of pepper, then flip over and season the flesh side with another 1/4 tsp. salt and a few grinds of pepper.

Add the Cheddar, Havarti, chives, cream, eggs, garlic, 1 tsp. salt and a few grinds of pepper to the liquid measuring cup or bowl with the zucchini flesh. Whisk until well combined. Pour the mixture into the cavity of each zucchini boat.

Using both hands to lift the zucchini carefully, place the filled boat in the middle of the grill over indirect heat (where the burner is turned off), cover, and cook until the eggs have puffed up slightly and are just set, 25 to 30 minutes. Use grilling tongs to remove the zucchini to a cutting board. Carefully wrap each zucchini boat in 1 of the bacon strips. Return to the grill over indirect heat and continue grilling, covered, until the eggs are completely set and the bacon is warmed and just crispy, 18 to 20 minutes.

Lemon Zucchini Coffee Cake

Prep Time: 30 min.

Cook Time: 45 min.

Total Time: 1 hr. 15 min.

Servings: 8

Crumb Topping:

3/4 C. all-purpose flour
1/2 C. packed light brown sugar
1 T. lemon zest
1/4 tsp. salt
6 T. cold unsalted butter, cut into chunks

Cake:

2 C. all-purpose flour

2 T. lemon zest
1 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 C. unsalted butter, melted and cooled
1/4 C. vegetable oil
2/3 C. sugar
1/3 C. sour cream at room temperature
1/4 C. fresh lemon juice
1 tsp. vanilla
2 eggs at room temperature
1 C. grated zucchini (do not squeeze dry)

Glaze:

1/2 C. powdered sugar
1 T. fresh lemon juice
1 T. milk

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease the sides and bottom of an 8- to 9-inch springform pan.

For the topping: stir flour, sugar, zest, and salt. Add butter, pressing into the dry ingredients with your fingertips until butter pieces are small and distributed throughout. Set aside.

For the cake: whisk flour, zest, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. In another bowl, whisk melted butter, oil, sugar, sour cream, lemon juice, and vanilla until smooth. Whisk in eggs. Add flour mixture to wet ingredients, stirring just until combined. Fold in zucchini.

Pour batter into the prepared pan, smoothing evenly. Sprinkle crumb topping over the top.

Bake for 45–55 minutes until set in the center. Let cool in the pan for 10 minutes. Run a thin knife along the edge of the pan, then remove the springform side.

For the glaze: whisk powdered sugar with lemon juice and milk. Adjust consistency with more sugar or milk/juice as needed. Spoon over the warm cake.

Once completely cooled, wrap tightly in foil and let rest at room temperature overnight.

Pasta with Zucchini Pesto

Total Time: 30 min.

Servings: 4-6

1 lb. mezzis rigatoni or other short pasta
1 lb. green beans, cut into 1-1/2 inch pieces
1 med. zucchini
1/4 C. sliced almonds
2 garlic cloves
1 C. fresh parsley
1/2 C. fresh tarragon
1/3 C. plus 2 T. olive oil
1/2 C. grated parmesan
cheese, plus more for topping
1 lb. yellow summer squash, cut into half-moons
3/4 C. heavy cream
salt and black pepper, to taste

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the pasta and cook according to the package directions, adding the green beans during the last 2 minutes. Reserve 1 C. cooking water, then drain the pasta and green beans and place in a large bowl.

Meanwhile, slice the zucchini in half lengthwise. Use a spoon to scrape out the seeds. Chop the zucchini into 1/2 inch pieces.

Make the pesto: Place the almonds and garlic in a food processor and pulse until finely chopped. Add the parsley, tarragon and zucchini and pulse until finely chopped. With the machine running, slowly drizzle in 1/3 C. olive oil and process until fairly smooth. Scrape into a bowl and mix in the parmesan and season with salt and pepper.

Heat the remaining 2 T. olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the yellow squash, season with salt and pepper and cook, stirring, until browned, 4 to 5 minutes.

Add the heavy cream to the skillet and stir. Reduce the heat to low and let thicken slightly, about 2 minutes. Mix in the pesto until evenly distributed.

Add the pesto mixture to the pasta and green beans and toss, adding the reserved cooking water as needed to loosen. Serve with more parmesan for topping.

Zucchini Oatmeal Chocolate Chip Cookies

Level: Easy

Total: 40 min.

Active: 15 min.

Servings: 12 to 15 cookies

1 med. zucchini, grated
2 C. old-fashioned rolled oats
1 C. whole-wheat flour
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/4 tsp. allspice
8 T. (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature
3/4 C. packed light brown sugar
1 lg. egg, at room temperature
2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
1 C. dark chocolate chips
1/2 C. toasted pecans, chopped, optional
Flaky sea salt, optional

Preheat the oven to 375°F Line 2 rimmed baking sheets with parchment.

Lay out the grated zucchini on a paper-towel lined plate, to absorb as much water as possible. Set aside.

Whisk the oats, flour, salt, baking soda and allspice together in a large bowl.

Beat the butter and brown sugar in a separate bowl with an electric mixer (or using a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment) on medium speed until light yellow and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add the egg and vanilla and mix until smooth. Add the dry ingredients to the creamed mixture and mix on low just until there's no more powdery residue, 15 to 20 seconds, then add the zucchini, chocolate chips and toasted pecans if using and mix on low until there is no dry flour in the dough.

Use a 1/4-cup ice cream scoop to scoop the dough onto the prepared baking sheets, spacing at least 1 inch apart. Sprinkle the tops with flaky sea salt if using. Bake until the tops and sides start to brown, 15 to 20 minutes. Let the cookies cool on the sheet for at least 5 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Store cookies in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

Blueberry Zucchini Squares

Prep: 30 min.

Bake: 30 min. + cooling

Servings: 2 dozen

2 C. shredded zucchini (do not pack)
1/2 C. buttermilk
1 T. grated lemon zest
3 T. lemon juice
1 C. butter, softened
2-1/2 C. sugar
2 lg. eggs, room temperature
3-1/4 C. plus 2 T. all-purpose flour, divided
1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt
2 C. fresh or frozen blueberries

Glaze:

2 C. confectioners' sugar

1/4 C. buttermilk
1 T. grated lemon zest
2 tsp. lemon juice
1/8 tsp. salt

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease a 15x10x1-in. baking pan.

In a small bowl, combine zucchini, buttermilk, lemon zest and lemon juice; toss to combine. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy, 5-7 minutes. Beat in eggs, 1 at a time. In another bowl, whisk 3-1/4 cups flour, baking soda and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture alternately with zucchini mixture, mixing well after each addition. Toss blueberries with remaining flour; fold into batter.

Transfer batter to prepared pan, spreading evenly (pan will be full). Bake 30-35 minutes or until light golden brown and a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool completely in pan on a wire rack.

In a small bowl, mix glaze ingredients until smooth; spread over top. Let stand until set.

Notes: If you don't have buttermilk in your fridge, make your own by mixing 1 to 2 T. of lemon juice or vinegar into 1 C. of milk. Allow it to sit for 5-10 minutes.

Line your pan with parchment paper for easy removal and cleanup!

If using frozen blueberries, use without thawing to avoid discoloring the batter.

Quote of the Week:

“Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.”

~ Albert Einstein