

Eating Local & Seasonal: Zucchini

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GEORGINA NURSE PRACTITIONER LED CLINIC

One of Canada's favourite summer squash, zucchini, is here for the season. This vegetable is so versatile and can be incorporated into anyone's eating plan and style. From barbecues, to salads, to baked goods, there is always a way to use this vegetable. Get inspired by new ideas in this issue!

Buying Zucchini

Zucchini comes in a variety of colours - dark green, light green, yellow, or striped. Choose zucchini that are



young and tender. The ideal size is under 6 inches. They should be firm to the touch, with no soft spots or bruises. The skin should be smooth and glossy.

Storing Zucchini

Store zucchini in the fridge in a plastic bag for up to five days or in the freezer for up to six months. To freeze, slice and blanch the zucchini in boiling water for 2 minutes. Transfer to ice water bath to cool. Pat dry and lay out the slices on a baking sheet to freeze. Once frozen, the slices can be transferred to a freezer bag.

Preparing Zucchini for Eating

Wash the zucchini under cold running water. Trim off both ends. The skin can be eaten along with the zucchini raw or cooked.

How to Use Zucchini

If you've got a zucchini garden, you know the struggle of figuring out how to use up all that zucchini at the end of the season! Don't worry, with the ideas below, you will use them all up in no time:

- Grate and cook down into a sauce - great for spreading on toast, adding into scrambled eggs or as a pasta sauce - see recipe on next page.
- Grate zucchini and add into muffins, loaves, cakes, cookies, and homemade burgers or meatballs.
- Cut into strips and barbecue or roast with seasoning.
- Cut into strips and coat in flour, eggs, followed by mixture of breadcrumbs, parmesan and Italian seasoning. Bake to make zucchini fries.
- Use a peeler or spiralizer to make wide or thin zucchini noodles for salads or pasta recipes.
- Hollow out zucchini halves and add filling to make stuffed zucchini boats.
- Chop into small pieces and add into frittatas, soups and stir-fries.
- Marinate in a vinaigrette or make zucchini salsa to use as a topping.



Creamy Lemon Zucchini Pasta

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

Ingredients:

2 lb Zucchini (4-6)
1 large shallot or 1/2 small onion
4 large garlic cloves
3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1/4 tsp crushed red pepper flakes
1 tsp salt (or less according to taste)
Ground black pepper
12 oz long pasta of choice
1 lemon
1/2 oz grated Parmesan cheese
1/2 cup lightly packed basil leaves,
coarsely chopped
1/2 cup cream

Directions:

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil and add about 1 tbsp of salt.
2. Trim zucchini and grate on the large holes of a box grater over a clean kitchen towel. Peel shallot and grate on the large holes of grater into towel. Peel garlic cloves and grate on small holes of grater into towel.
3. Gather the ends of the towel together and squeeze out water from the zucchini, about 2/3 cup of liquid. Discard liquid.
4. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium high heat. Add crushed red pepper flakes and cook for about 30 seconds. Add zucchini mixture, salt, and ground black pepper to taste. Stir and cook until zucchini mixture becomes thick and starting to stick to bottom of pot, about 15-20 minutes.
5. When zucchini has cooked for 5-10 minutes, start cooking pasta in the pot of boiling water until al dente. Scoop out 2 cups of pasta water and set aside.
6. Meanwhile, juice 1 lemon into a small bowl and set aside.
7. Once pasta is ready, transfer to the skillet with zucchini mixture. Reduce heat to medium low. Add 1/2 cup pasta water and 1/2 cup cream and stir to combine. Add cheese, another 1/2 cup pasta water and stir. Cook until a creamy sauce coats the pasta.
8. Remove pasta from heat and stir in 2 tbsp lemon juice and basil leaves. Season with salt, black pepper and more lemon juice as needed.

Sources:

(1) Images in respective order by Les Bourgeonniers and Lgh_9 from Pexels
(2) Recipe by Sarah Jampel from Bon Appetit. Retrieved from <https://www.bonappetit.com/recipe/creamy-lemon-zucchini-pasta>
(3) Zucchini Information Sheet, Half Your Plate. Retrieved from https://www.halfyourplate.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/food_info_sheets_eng_zucchini-1.pdf