FAST FOOD:
3 QUICK & EASY ZUCCHINI RECIPES

by STACEY MURPHY
Why Zucchini / Summer Squash?

A single zucchini plant can yield 10 pounds of food for your family in a single growing season. That’s a lot of squash! And if you have multiple plants, they can produce a LOT in any given week.

Thank goodness there are tons of delicious ways to cook, sauté, stir fry, roast, shred, blend, dehydrate, pickle, ferment, freeze and can zucchini or summer squash. Here are just three to get you started.

Before we get started:

I have taught hundreds of teens and adults how to cook and create recipes, here's some of my biggest lessons learned when you are trying new recipes or learning how to cook for the first time:

1. Be open to giving ingredients you don't like a second chance. Often, you may not like an individual flavor, but when balanced with other ingredients, it's not only delicious, but also adds more nutrients to your plate.

2. Well-balanced flavors make our tongue happy. We know it when it happens. Satisfying recipes include five flavors: sweet, sour, salty, spicy, and bitter. Sweet doesn't mean sugar and spicy doesn't necessarily mean hot. Never judge an individual ingredient, because it may hold an important role in the balance of flavors.

3. Many young kids LOVE sour flavors. Your preferred tastes will not be the same as your kids. If they are old enough to cook with you, let them season the dish to taste so that they will eat it.

You CAN do this! You can make delicious garden-fresh recipes.

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Ingredients

1 medium zucchini per pint jar
1/2 cup apple cider vinegar per pint jar
1/2 cup water per pint jar
1/2 teaspoon salt per pint jar
(or less based on your preference)
Optional: 1/2 tablespoon sugar or honey per pint jar based on your tastes

Spice Blend 1: Fresh dill, Garlic Clove (peeled), Celery Seed, Mustard Seed, All Spice, Turmeric, Red Chili Flakes, Bay Leaf, Coriander Seed

Spice Blend 2: 1/2 Small Onion sliced thin, Dried Dandelion Leaves, Cardamom Pods, Turmeric, Ginger

Spice Blend 3: Dried Elderberries, Dried Hibiscus

Preparation Time: 5-10 minutes
Chill Time: 1-2 days

1. Chop vegetables to desired shape and size: spears, rounds, etc.
3. Add desired spice blends to jars.
4. Bring brine to boil: vinegar, water, salt (sugar or honey optional). Note how many jars you have packed and scale up the brine proportionately. If you’re on a low salt diet, salt helps to bring out flavors in this recipe, but you can scale back to just a dash. You don’t need to add sugar for these to be delicious, because you can add sweetness with your spice blend (elderberries, hibiscus, cardamom, etc).
5. Pour brine over packed vegetables.
6. Place in fridge and cool for 1-2 days. You can try them after 20 minutes, but you’ll most likely only taste the vinegar. The rest of the flavors will emerge within 1 day and you will find peak flavors emerge after 2 days.

NOTE: You can make quick pickles in a big bowl if you like. Anything that can withstand the boiling water. Jars are great for creating multiple recipes at once so you always have something new to try.

Kids Favorite!
In general, quick pickles do well among kids. They typically like the sour of the vinegar. Kids also like fun colors like purple, red & orange. So allow your spice blend to create visual excitement as well as flavor.
Ingredients

4 cups shredded zucchini (4 medium zucchinis)

2 Flax eggs (2 tablespoons flax meal and 4 tablespoons water, mixed & cooled until congealed) Can substitute regular eggs if you like.

1/4 cup chick pea flour (grind dry peas)

Optional: Small onion finely diced will add sweetness.

Optional: sprouted French Lentils (Soak the night before)

Optional: top with a spoonful of coconut yogurt or sour cream. Many people like a spoonful of applesauce to go with their yogurt or cream as well. These two things add sour and sweet to the savory dish making it a delight on the tongue!

Spice Blend 1: 1 bunch fresh parsley chopped finely, 1/2 teaspoon chili powder

Spice Blend 2: 1 Bunch fresh cilantro chopped finely, 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon, 1/2 teaspoon garam masala, scallions, carrots

Spice Blend 3: 3 sprigs fresh rosemary, 6 sprigs fresh thyme, 1 stem fresh sage all chopped

Preparation Time: 20-25 minutes

Cook Time: 8-10 minutes

1. Sprinkle shredded zucchini with salt, mix & let stand 15 minutes

2. (Vegan option) Mix flax egg & refrigerate for 15 minutes until congealed

3. Squeeze out excess water and moisture from zucchini

4. Mix together all ingredient along with preferred spice blend

5. Make flat patties from 2 spoonfuls each. Will form approximately 10-12 fritters. Freeze patties for later in week if desired.

6. Heat skillet with coconut oil on medium high heat. Fry patties in pan, 4 minutes each side.

7. Garnish with fresh herbs, yogurt, sour cream, applesauce if desired.

8. Serve immediately, they will cool quickly.
Zucchini Spread (Squash-a-ganoush)

Ingredients

2 pounds chopped Squash / Zucchini (4 medium zucchinis)
1/2 cup Tahini
1/4 cup Olive Oil
1-2 Lemons
1-2 Cloves Garlic
2 tablespoons chopped fresh Parsley
1/4 teaspoon chopped fresh Oregano
Smoked or Spicy Paprika

Get creative with your own spice blends! Maybe you want to try chopped fresh basil, garlic and pine nuts on top, maybe cilantro and jalapeño... what's fresh in your garden?

If you want to really pack in the flavor, roast your squash WITH some delicious herbs...

Or try adding just a splash of balsamic vinegar. It sounds strange, but it can add a hint of sweet.

Preparation Time: 5-10 minutes
Cook Time: 30-40 minutes

1. In a roasting dish, spread chopped squash out and mix with 1/8 cup of olive oil, salt and pepper. Roast until very soft, a little browning can add flavor (30 minutes on 400°F heat usually does the trick). Garlic clove may be roasted with squash or kept raw.

2. Let cool 5 minutes.

3. In a blender, mix the roasted squash, garlic, tahini, juice from the lemon until smooth.

4. Pour into bowl and taste test. Add lemon juice, salt and pepper to suit your taste buds.

5. Use spoon to create a valley for remaining olive oil.

6. Garnish with olive oil, lemon juice, fresh herbs and spices.

7. Most people prefer this chilled, but it is also delicious warm out of the oven.