It's Zucchini Season!

At this time of the summer, gardens and farmers markets are filled with fresh vegetables for us to enjoy in different ways. Your neighbors might leave some zucchini at your front door or sneak some into your vehicle. Many people have bumper crops of summer squash, such as zucchini, crookneck and straight-neck types.

One-half cup of summer squash has just 10 calories. Summer squash has vitamins C and A, potassium and other vitamins and minerals. These are some ways to use zucchini on your menu.

**Grill it.**
- Rinse, then slice zucchini into ½-inch-thick pieces.
- Place in a bowl, then add a small amount of canola oil or olive oil. Mix.
- Sprinkle with your favorite seasonings, such as garlic powder, pepper or Italian seasoning.
- Grill zucchini over medium-low heat for three to four minutes per side.
- Use a perforated grilling pan (so the zucchini doesn’t fall through the grate).
- Alternate method: Slice zucchini lengthwise, brush with oil and cook over the grates.

**Make noodles.**
- Rinse but do not peel two small zucchini.
- Make zucchini noodles by slicing into thin strips with a knife or vegetable peeler. Discard seeds.
- Heat oil in a skillet. Use 1 tablespoon oil for 2 cups of zucchini noodles.
- Saute for one minute.
- Add ¼ cup of water and cook for about five minutes.

**Use it in baking.**
- Use grated zucchini in baked goods, such as bread and muffins.

**Extend foods.**
- Add grated zucchini to meat loaf or meatballs to keep the recipe moist. Use about 1 cup of grated zucchini per pound of ground meat.

**Eat the squash blossoms.**
- Zucchini blossoms can be added to soup, salads, quesadillas and many other foods. If you eat the blossoms, they won’t form more zucchini!

**Preserve it.**
- Freeze zucchini by slicing or grating; blanch in boiling water for one minute if grated or three minutes if sliced; allow to dry, then package in freezer containers.
- Label with contents and date.
- See [www.ag.ndsu.edu/food](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/food) for more information.

This program is funded in part by USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. SNAP provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more contact your county Social Services office or call 1-800-755-2716. County Commissions, North Dakota State University and U.S. Department of Agriculture. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. NDSU is an equal opportunity institution.
We have lots of great fresh vegetables available, but my kids usually avoid them. Do you have any tips?

We have some strategies to help kids become good vegetable eaters, but be patient. Getting kids to try new foods, especially vegetables, may take 10 or more tries.

- Have your kids help you harvest the vegetables, or shop at a farmers market or grocery store.
- At home, invite them to help you prepare the food. Let them help create and name the recipe, such as “Sally’s Super Salad.”
- Offer the food in different forms, such as raw and cooked, and cut into interesting shapes.
- Try serving raw veggies with a dip such as salsa or hummus (chickpea dip).
- Be sure to eat together with most members of the family present as often as you can. Make mealtimes fun. Family mealtimes encourage good nutrition.
- Be sure your children see you eating (and enjoying) vegetables.

FoodWi$e Tip of the Month

From apples to zucchini, are your fruits and vegetables spoiling before you have a chance to eat them? Try preserving them. Our website (www.ag.ndsu.edu/food) has free information about freezing, drying, pickling and canning foods safely. Click on “Food Preservation” to view all the resources. Your local office of the NDSU Extension Service can provide more information.

Taco Summer Squash Boats

- 6 medium summer squash, cut in half lengthwise
- ½ c. salsa
- 1 lb. ground turkey (or extra lean ground beef)
- 1 packet taco seasoning
- ½ small onion, chopped fine
- ½ c. bell pepper, chopped fine
- 1 (4-oz.) can tomato sauce
- ¼ c. water
- ½ c. shredded cheese
- ¼ c. cilantro

Preheat oven to 350 F. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Place the squash in the boiling water for two minutes, then place on a paper towel to drain. Using a spoon, remove the seeds and discard. Scrape out the flesh of the squash, reserving 1 cup for this recipe and using the rest in other recipes. Spoon ¼ cup salsa into the bottom of a large baking dish and arrange squash face up. Set aside. Brown turkey in a large skillet until no longer pink. Add taco seasoning, onion, pepper, cilantro, reserved squash, tomato sauce and water, and stir to combine. Cover and simmer 20 minutes. Fill each squash boat with the turkey mixture, then top with cheese. Cover with foil and bake 25 to 30 minutes or until squash is fork tender and cheese is melted. Garnish and serve with salsa.

Makes six servings. Each serving has 250 calories, 11 grams (g) fat, 26 g protein, 13 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber and 430 milligrams sodium.