



# Extension News Column

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**Date:** Aug. 4, 2011  
**To:** Mary Beth Smetzer, community news editor, News-Miner, 459-7546 (wk), 452-7917 (fax), [msmetzer@newsminer.com](mailto:msmetzer@newsminer.com), and [people@newsminer.com](mailto:people@newsminer.com)  
**From:** Roxie Dinstel via Ronda Halvarson  
**Re:** Pinching Pennies to run on A-3 MONDAY, AUG. 8, ZUCCHINI DAY!!!! ☺

## Additional

**Contact:** Debbie Carter, information officer, 474-5406, [dscarter@alaska.edu](mailto:dscarter@alaska.edu)

August 8 is a day to celebrate. It is “Put a Zucchini on Your Neighbor’s Porch Day.” When I first heard about this holiday, it made me giggle, but then how appropriate is this holiday? In my experience, gardeners (and everyone else) have either one or a thousand zucchinis — nothing in between. And when you ask others if they want them, the answer is always, “No thank you.”

So today is the day to explore the good nutrition and flavor that zucchini can bring to our world. No more bad rap for the zucchini.

Zucchini is very low in calories (more than 95 percent water) and a good source of vitamin C, fiber, potassium and magnesium. The green skinned variety is a source of carotenoid pigment that helps protect against cataracts and macular degeneration. So, be sure to eat the tender skin on the zucchini!

When choosing zucchini, pick firm, slender squash that are free of soft spots or wrinkled skin. For best quality, choose those that are 6 to 8 inches long and not more than 2 inches in diameter. Larger zucchini are better suited to baking. Store them in the refrigerator and wash just before preparing.

Before you try to give (or sneak!) your zucchini away, here are lower calorie suggestions for using it.

You can eat yours raw by sprinkling zucchini slices with garlic powder or combine garlic powder and Parmesan cheese. Enjoy zucchini on the grill. Cut zucchini into spears and brush with fat free Italian dressing and grill using direct heat until golden brown — about 10–15 minutes total. If you are making lasagna, slice your zucchini thin and use it in place of noodles.

Check out more flavorful ways to cook your zucchini:

## Skillet Zucchini

1/2 cup low sodium V-8 juice

1 cup canned mushrooms, drained

1/4 tsp. black pepper  
1 medium onion, chopped  
1 medium tomato, chopped

2 medium zucchini squash, sliced thin  
1 tsp. basil

Put the tomato juice and pepper in a skillet or pan. Cook on high heat for 3 minutes. Add the onion, tomato and mushrooms. Reduce heat to medium high. Cover and cook for 5 minutes. Add zucchini; cover and cook for another 5 to 7 minutes. Eat hot or serve over noodles or rice.

*Source: Pennsylvania Nutrition Education Program*

#### Zucchini Muffins

1 1/2 cups white whole wheat flour  
1 1/2 tsp. baking powder  
1/4 tsp. baking soda  
1 tsp. cinnamon  
1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg

3/4 cup sugar  
3 Tbsp. vegetable oil  
1 cup fat free milk  
1 1/2 cup grated zucchini  
1/4 cup egg whites

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Spray muffin tins with non-stick cooking spray. In large bowl, stir together flour, baking powder, baking soda and spices. In a medium bowl, beat egg whites slightly and stir in sugar, oil and zucchini. Add to flour mixture stirring just until combined. Fill muffin cups 2/3 full. Bake for about 18 minutes or until tops are lightly browned. Allow to cool for 5 minutes and then turn out of pan. Serve warm or refrigerate or freeze for later use.

*Source: Communicating Food for Health.com/recipe*

#### Zucchini Coleslaw

2 cups coarsely shredded zucchini  
2 cups shredded cabbage  
1 medium shredded carrot  
2 sliced green onions

1/2 cup thinly sliced radishes (optional)  
1/3 cup mayonnaise, low fat  
1/3 cup mild salsa

Drain zucchini by pressing between layers of paper towels. Put zucchini in a large bowl; add cabbage, carrot, onions and radishes. In a small bowl, combine remaining ingredients. Pour over vegetables and toss well. Cover and chill at least one hour before serving.

*Source: U of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service*

Now, if you want to can or freeze that zucchini, give me a call at the office at 474-2426. I'll be glad to share methods for preservation. I even have a great way to can zucchini in pineapple juice, allowing you to substitute it for pineapple in recipes. So, feed your family well and use up those zucchinis!

**Roxie Rodgers Dinstel is a professor of extension on the Tanana District Extension Faculty. Questions or column requests can be e-mailed to her at [rrdinstel@alaska.edu](mailto:rrdinstel@alaska.edu) or by calling 907-474-2426. The Cooperative Extension Service is part of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, working in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.**