

# Versatile zucchini delights creative cooks

If memory serves me correctly, the zucchini crop is due right about now.

Home gardeners who planted this lovely summer squash in early spring are now rewarded handsomely for their labors — almost too handsomely in many cases, since zucchini does not appear in manageable batches but in overwhelming abundance.

Some of it can be preserved by freezing or canning, but the best features of the vegetable are sacrificed in the process. Its lovely texture is reduced to an unappetizing sogginess and even its delicate flavor seems lost.

An alternate solution to the problem of over-abundance is to share the harvest with non-gardening friends who would probably love to help consume the surplus.

Just be sure, whether harvesting for yourself or for others, to get the zucchini off the vine while it is six or eight inches long. The huge clubs into which zucchini will grow are visually impressive but gastronomically disastrous.

The tender skins (which should puncture easily with a finger nail) become tough rinds which should be peeled before the flesh can be eaten. The seeds become large and hard and should also be discarded. It would be better to grow non-edible gourds for show purposes.

THE VERSATILITY of zucchini makes it a special delight for the creative cook.

active cook.

A few years ago, Zucchini Bread became very popular. This is one way of freezing the vegetable with satisfactory results.

It would be a shame, however, not to enjoy zucchini fresh in a as many ways as possible while it is at its peak. Its mild taste makes it an ideal food to combine with a whole range of other flavors, while its cylindrical shape makes it ideal for stuffing or for slicing finger-style and serving with a dip.

Too often, zucchini if served fresh at all, appears on the dinner table as an over-cooked, soupy, bland side-dish — an undesired fate. The recipe below lifts it from this role and features it as the basis of a number of unusual entrees.

**THE GARBANZO Cheese Salad** is from "Diet from a Small Planet" and makes a lovely cold summer lunch or dinner. The garbanzo beans and cheese are important components of this salad, since their proteins complement one another. Peel free, however, to vary the fresh vegetables according to what is available from your garden or local fruit market.

The Zucchini Pepper Pie, like the preceding salad, makes optimum use of a variety of summer garden vegetables. It would make an unusual and delicious entree for an elegant picnic. Accompany it with a bottle of chilled white wine and a good crusty French



## A Question of Taste

By Hilary Keating Colledge

bread and enjoy in a tranquil, pastoral setting.

Zucchini and Mushroom Frittata is an interesting variation of the traditional open-faced, Italian omelette. Depending on the accompaniments you choose, this could be served any time of the day.

**THE FINAL** recipe teams zucchini and pasta with superb results. A refreshing change from the heavier pasta dishes we enjoy in the colder months, this combination is rich and creamy and needs only the addition of a platter of sliced tomatoes, still warm from the summer sun, to make a lovely, quick warm-weather supper.

Two final thoughts on zucchini: Dieters will be delighted to know that zucchini is incredibly low in calories — only nine calories in  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of cooked zucchini.

Anyone working with a European cookbook or menu might find it useful to know that they will probably find zucchini listed as "Italian marrow," or

as "courgette."

### GARBANZO CHEESE SALAD

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup dry garbanzo beans, cooked and cooled  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  bunch red leaf lettuce, torn up  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  bunch spinach, torn  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup scallions, sliced  
1 green pepper, chopped  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup fresh, raw, shelled peas  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup zucchini or yellow crookneck squash, diced or sliced  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cucumber, chopped or sliced  
1 cup bean or alfalfa sprouts  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cheese, grated

Combine all ingredients, sprinkle with favorite dressing, and serve on a bed of greens. Makes 4-5 servings.

### ZUCCHINI-PEPPER PIE

9-inch, unbaked pastry shell  
3 medium zucchini (1 lb.), thinly sliced  
2 green onions, sliced  
1 large clove garlic, minced  
2 tsp. butter or margarine  
1 medium tomato, peeled, seeded, and

diced  
1 medium green pepper, chopped  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  tsp. salt  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  basil  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. pepper  
3 eggs  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup heavy cream  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup grated Parmesan cheese.  
Prick the bottom and sides of the pie shell with a fork and bake in an oven preheated to 450 degrees for 8 minutes, or until lightly browned. Cool. Sauté zucchini, onions, and garlic in the butter or margarine about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in tomato, green pepper, salt, basil, and pepper. Cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are tender and liquid has evaporated, about 10 minutes. Spread vegetables evenly in shell. Beat eggs and cream until mixed; pour over vegetables. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Bake in an oven preheated to 350 degrees for 30 minutes, or until set. Makes 6 servings.

### ZUCCHINI AND MUSHROOM FRITTATA

1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped zucchini  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sliced mushrooms  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup chopped green pepper  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped onion  
1 garlic clove, minced  
3 tbsp. vegetable oil  
6 eggs  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup light cream  
1 lb. cream cheese, diced  
2 cups cubed stale white bread

$\frac{1}{2}$  cups grated sharp Cheddar cheese  
Salt  
Pepper

Heat the vegetable oil in a large skillet. Add the zucchini, mushrooms, green pepper, onions, and garlic and sauté for 5 minutes, or until softened. Remove the pan from the heat and let the mixture cool.

In a large bowl, beat the eggs, cream, cream cheese, bread, cheddar cheese, sautéed vegetables and salt and pepper to taste, combining the mixture well. Pour into a well-buttered, 10-inch spring form pan and bake at 350 for 55 minutes, or until the frittata is browned and set. Let stand for 10 minutes. Carefully remove the sides of the pan and transfer the frittata with a broad spatula to a heated serving plate. Serve warm, cut into wedges. Makes 6 servings.

## CMU names honor students

Central Michigan University has named five local residents to the academic honor list for the winter semester ending in May.

They are: Susan R. Rabahy of Lathrup Village, and Jeffrey R. Conway, Nancy T. Jankowski and Patricia Newland, all of Southfield.

## Tomatoes: the taste of summer



## Byrd's Kitchen

by Vivian Byrd

Fresh tomato, to many palates, is the taste of summer. Sometimes referred to as "love apples," tomatoes are best when gathered bright red and bursting with flavor, from one's own backyard garden.

Next best seems to be tomatoes purchased from farmer's markets or roadside vegetable stands, places which sell home grown produce.

Those tomatoes have a common advantage of having been allowed to ripen on the vine before being picked and offered for sale.

This versatile vegetable can be sliced, quartered, baked, boiled, broiled, and so on. It can star on its own or sparkle in a salad, become a sauce or part of a sauce, or add extra flavor to any number of combinations of vegetables or casseroles.

Fresh tomatoes are delicious sliced thick and served with a little salt, or spread in a dish and sprinkled with oil, vinegar and a sprinkling of basil (tomatoes love basil) and allowed to sit for at least 10 minutes, then eaten as a salad. Other herbs may

be used in place of the basil, such as parsley, fennel, tarragon or a mixture of salad herbs, either fresh or dried.

For a variation, serve these sliced tomatoes with extra thin slices of onion on top or layered between the tomato slices.

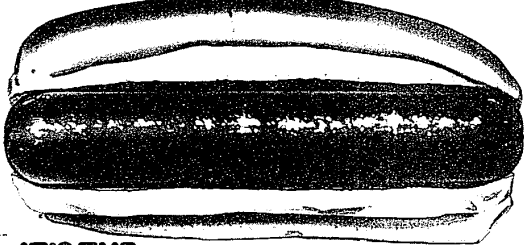
Below are some other ways with tomatoes which might appeal to you.

### BROILED TOMATOES WITH OLIVES

6 medium tomatoes  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped cooked ham  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped green olives  
Fresh dried basil to taste  
3 tbsp. olive oil

Halve the tomatoes and invert a few minutes to drain. Arrange them cut side up in a shallow casserole. Mix ham and olives and put a rounded tablespoon of the mixture on each tomato half. Sprinkle with basil and drizzle the oil over the top. Broil about 3 inches from element until brown (for about 10 minutes).

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