

Inviting from page 16D

It. In just a few days, pickled-sized zucchini can become a huge mutation right out of a Sci-Fi horror flick — or a blue ribbon prize winner at your local Labor Day festivity.

If perchance you observe your neighbors locking their doors and bolting their windows as they see you approach — arms loaded with zucchini — remind them of all they can do with it!

Zucchini ideas
Tempura batter-fried zucchini blossoms, zucchini breads (sweet or savory), zucchini lasagna, raw zucchini rounds in salads or a prime feature in a fresh crudite, chunky vegetable soup (heavy on the zucchini), zucchini moussaka, grilled spears of herbed zucchini, zucchini tarta (quiche), zucchini stuffed with rice and meat, carved zucchini for table decorations, zucchini boats to hold sauces or dips, melange of julienne vegetables (do lots of green and yellow zucchini, and pasta — served hot or cold. You can even make zucchini pancakes by substituting grated zucchini for potatoes.

When all else fails, here are some wonderful recipes to try.

Truly dessert and not bread — this delicious loaf cake is a hit for family or entertaining. Add a cup of cappuccino and some interesting conversation for a fun late night get-together.

RUTH'S CHOCOLATE CARAMEL CHERRY ZUCCHINI BREAD

¾ cup butter or margarine

- 2 cups sugar
- 5 egg whites
- 2½ cups sifted flour
- ¼ cup unsweetened caramel flavored cocoa (Frango cocoa, available at Hudson's)
- 1½ teaspoons baking soda
- 2½ teaspoons baking powder
- ½ cup ½ percent milk
- 2 cups shredded zucchini
- ½ cup dried Michigan cherries

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Grease and flour two bread/loaf pans (8½ by 4½ inches).

In a mixing bowl cream together butter or margarine and sugar — mix until light and fluffy — add egg whites and mix well.

Combine the flour, caramel cocoa, baking soda and baking powder — add to the creamed butter and sugar mixture, alternately with the milk.

Gently add in the zucchini and the dried cherries.

Pour batter evenly into the two loaf pans. Bake until nicely browned and cake tester comes out clean, 60 minutes to one hour.

Naughty, but nice, this tart is rich and delicious. Garnished with seasonal fruit — this zucchini tart is perfect for the most elegant buffet or brunch. Add a crisp green salad with homemade herbed croutons, splash with a mild vinaigrette and top with some toasted pine nuts.

ZUCCHINI TART

- Pastry for 9-inch tart shell (homemade or prepared)
- Parchment paper — cut to fit the bottom of pan
- Egg wash — 1 egg plus 1 tablespoon cold water
- 2-3 small zucchini (approximately 1¼ pounds)
- 1 tablespoon butter or margarine
- 3 tablespoons shallots, peeled and minced
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt
- ¼ teaspoon white pepper
- 1 teaspoon fresh oregano leaves, finely chopped
- 2 cups light sour cream
- 2 extra large eggs, slightly beaten
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ cup light Cheddar cheese, freshly grated
- ¼ cup Parmesan cheese, freshly grated
- Paprika — mild or hot — to taste

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Place the rolled out pastry dough evenly over a tart pan with a removable bottom. Trim off any excess pastry dough from top of tart pan.

Place a circle of parchment paper over dough and weigh down with pie pellets, raw rice, or dry beans — whatever you

have handy.

Bake the tart shell about 10-12 minutes, or until crust begins to turn lightly golden. Remove the parchment paper and weights. Brush the inside of the tart with the egg wash. Return to oven for 2 minutes to seal the lining. Remove from oven and let cool. Lower oven temperature to 325 degrees F.

Wash and dry zucchini — slice very thin into rounds.

In a skillet, saute the shallots in butter or margarine for two minutes, then add the zucchini — continue to saute for several minutes while adding in the salt and white pepper. Remove from heat source.

In small bowl mix together the sour cream, eggs and baking powder. Set aside momentarily.

Place a layer of zucchini mixture evenly over the bottom of the tart — add a layer of the sour cream/egg mixture followed by a layer of both types of grated cheese. Continue layering beginning with zucchini and ending with cheese.

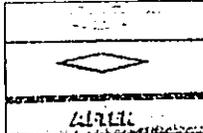
Sprinkle the top of the tart with paprika and bake for 40-45 minutes or until puffy and golden brown. Let set for a few minutes before serving.

Ruth Mossok Johnston is an author and food columnist who lives in Franklin. To leave a Voice Mail message for Ruth, dial (313) 953-2047, mailbox 1902.

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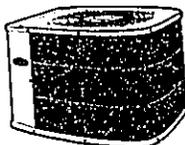


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