



ZUCCHINI TALKING POINTS

2. A Slice of History about Zucchini

- All squashes, including zucchini, originated in the Americas.
- Archaeologists have found evidence of zucchini in Mexico as early as 7000 BC.
- While most squash varieties were brought from America to Europe, zucchini originated in Italy as a result of spontaneously occurring mutations.
- Ancient Central Americans ate a diet rich in corn, beans and squash, a combination known today as "the three sisters."
- Zucchini arrived in California with Italian immigrants in the 1920s.



3. & 4. How Does Zucchini Grow?

- Zucchini is a warm-season crop that can grow easily in temperate climates. It is a short-season crop compared to other Cucurbit fruits, such as melons and cucumbers.
- The plants can withstand temperatures up to 100 degrees and do not grow well below 60 degrees.
- During the growing season, the ratio of male to female flowers on a plant is at least three to one. Only the female flowers can bear fruit and honeybees are the primary pollinators. The fruit grows from the base of the female flower on a short stem.
- Once fruit is set, zucchini can grow up to 1 inch per day.
- Zucchini is harvested in the summer time in South Dakota.
- This nutritious vegetable can be picked during summer months and on into late fall in southern states.

5. Why should we eat Zucchini

- A good source of vitamin C—a powerful antioxidant that may prevent cardiovascular disease and cancers.
- A good source of manganese, potassium, and vitamin B6—necessary for proper functioning of the human body.
- Zucchini has a high water content (over 95%) and has a very low calorie amount.

How Much Do I Need?

A ½ cup of sliced zucchini is about one cupped handful. The amount of fruits and vegetables you need depends on your age, gender, and physical activity level. All forms of fruits and vegetables count toward your total daily needs – fresh, frozen, cooked, dried, and 100% juice!

Remind students to eat a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables.

6. How do you pick good Zucchini?

- Zucchini should be picked when it is immature. If it is left to grow for too long or grows too big it will become tough. The seeds will be too big and it will not taste as flavorful.
- So, for best results pick smaller zucchini, you should pick it about every other day if you are growing it in your garden.
- Zucchini should be dark green in color and not have marks or cuts on it.



- The picture shown on the slide show has a zucchini that has too big of seeds, this would not be one you would want to eat.

Serving Ideas

- Sauté chopped zucchini, yellow squash, onions and peppers. Add to chicken enchiladas, burritos, or quesadillas.
- Dip raw zucchini slices into lowfat salad dressing for a light summer snack.
- Sauté chopped zucchini with garlic and a dash of oregano. Sprinkle with lowfat cheese and serve as a warm side dish

Just to remind you about zucchini's charm, here are 10 fun facts about one of our favorite summer vegetables.

1. Zucchini contains 95 percent water; a small one contains about 25 calories. Substitute zucchini for a baked potato and save more than 100 calories.
2. Zucchini was first brought to the United States in the 1920s by the Italians.
3. Courgette is what the French and the British call zucchini.
4. The flowers of the zucchini plant are edible. Fried squash blossoms are considered a delicacy.
5. Purportedly, the world's largest zucchini measured 69 ½ inches long and weighed 65 pounds, although there is no photographic documentation.
6. Zucchini is fat free, cholesterol free, low in sodium, rich in manganese and vitamin C and has more potassium than a banana.
7. One pound of zucchini equals about 4 cups grated zucchini, 2 cups of salted and squeezed zucchini and about 1¼ cups mashed zucchini and 3 ½ cups sliced of chunked zucchini.
8. Zucchini bread is one of the most popular ways to use zucchini.
9. Bigger is not necessarily better. Small to medium sized zucchinis are the most flavorful and the darker the skin, the richer the nutrients.
10. The town of Obetz, Ohio has an annual Zucchini Fest each year.