

Zucchini

HEALTH BENEFITS

Zucchini is a popular summer squash that botanically speaking, is considered a fruit. However, zucchini is often treated as a vegetable because it is typically cooked in savory dishes.

It's known for its mild flavor, versatility, and numerous health benefits. This superfood is low in calories and contains a good amount of dietary fiber, which aids digestion and helps maintain a healthy weight. It is also a rich source of vitamins A, C, and K, as well as minerals like potassium and manganese.

The combination of dietary fiber, potassium, and vitamin C in zucchini also contributes to heart health. Zucchini is also packed with antioxidants such as vitamin C and beta-carotene which reduces the risk of chronic diseases, including certain types of cancer.

Zucchini can be prepared in various ways, such as grilling, baking, stir-frying, or even spiralizing it into noodles as a healthy alternative to pasta. It can also be enjoyed on its own, added to salads, soups, stews, or used as a filling in sandwiches or wraps.

SELECTION & STORAGE

Look for zucchini that feels firm and free of soft spots or bruises, about 6 to 8 inches long. The skin of zucchini should be smooth and glossy, without any blemishes or cuts. Opt for zucchini with a vibrant dark green color, as this indicates that it is ripe and at its peak freshness. However, some zucchini varieties have a lighter green or yellow color, which is also acceptable. Zucchini should be stored in the refrigerator up to one week, preferably in a perforated plastic bag or a loosely wrapped paper towel to retain moisture.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH: CREAMY TOMATO BASIL ZUCCHINI LINGUINE

INGREDIENTS:

DISH

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 chicken breast, diced (optional)
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 2 zucchinis, peeled
- 1 teaspoon salt

CREAMY SAUCE

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup chicken broth
- 1/2 cup Greek yogurt
- 1/2 cup parmesan cheese, grated
- 1/2 teaspoon dried basil



DIRECTIONS:

Use a peeler to thinly slice zucchini into "linguini" noodles. Set aside in a bowl and mix with salt. Let sit for 20 minutes to draw moisture out of the noodles. Drain the zucchini with a clean dish cloth or paper towels.

Heat olive oil in a large skillet. Add in chicken breast, salt, pepper, and garlic powder. Cook until no longer pink. Add in zucchini noodles, cherry tomatoes, and dried basil. Cook for an additional minute and remove from heat. Set aside in a bowl.

Heat olive oil for the creamy sauce in the skillet. Add in garlic cloves and cook for about 30 seconds. Add in chicken broth to cool skillet, and reduce heat to low. (This step is important: if skillet is too hot, the Greek yogurt will curdle, so allow it to cool down before adding it in).

Add in Greek yogurt, parmesan, and dried basil. Mix until well combined. Add in the chicken, zoodles, and tomato mixture. Mix together and then remove from heat. Serve and garnish with fresh chopped basil, as desired. Enjoy!