Add pizzazz, not calories, with zucchini

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(HealthDay)—Whether you grow it yourself or buy it at your farmers' market or grocery store, zucchini is a great way to add variety to traditional dishes and even increase portion sizes of favorite recipes

without extra calories.

Love cool cucumber salad? For a tasty variation, use thin strips of peeled zucchini, cut on a mandoline. (Note: Mandoline blades are sharp. Always use the gripper to hold the food you're prepping.) Toss with [lemon juice](#), chopped dill, salt and [olive oil](#), then refrigerate for one hour before serving.

Next, try zucchini "noodles" in place of white pasta. Grate zucchini with the shredder attachment of the mandoline. Heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat, then cook the zucchini for one minute until it begins to soften. Toss with your favorite marinara.

Want to get more creative? These easy zucchini fritters taste great hot or cold.

Zucchini Fritters

- 2 eggs lightly beaten
- 1/4 cup parsley, chopped
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 cup white whole-wheat flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 cup tarragon, chopped (optional)
- 1/8 to 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg, as desired
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper or to taste
- 1 pound zucchini (about 2 medium), stems removed and grated
- Olive or canola oil

Combine all ingredients except the zucchini and oil in a large bowl. Whisk for one to two minutes to remove any large lumps. Add the [zucchini](#) to the bowl. Its moisture will produce a thick batter as you stir

(use it immediately).
Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large skillet over medium-high [heat](link).
Using a 1/4-cup measure, make three or four fritters at a time. Cook two
to three minutes on each side until lightly browned. Drain on paper
towels. Repeat until you've used up all the batter. Serve immediately.

Yield: 4 servings

More information: The USDA has more on [zucchini](link) and other
summer squash varieties.

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