

Three Ways to Preserve Zucchini

A close-up photograph of three fresh zucchinis resting on a wooden surface. The zucchinis are dark green with a bumpy texture and are covered in water droplets. The stems are cut and show a lighter green interior. The background is softly blurred, showing more of the wooden surface and the tops of the zucchinis.

3 WAYS TO PRESERVE ZUCCHINI

LIVE WELL UTAH

Do you have more zucchini than you know what to do with? Don't throw it out, try preserving it! Watch our latest segment on Studio 5 to learn three ways to preserve zucchini. Read on for the recipes we mentioned in the show.



Dried Zucchini

Cut washed zucchini in 1/4 inch slices and dry in food dehydrator. Use dried zucchini in soup, chili, or casseroles.

Frozen Zucchini

Prepare zucchini for freezing by cutting it the way you like to eat it (cubed, shredded, spiralized, sliced, etc.). Blanch zucchini in boiling water or steam, then cool in an ice bath before freezing.

Ultimate Zucchini Brownies

Ingredients:

- 2 cups zucchini (fresh or frozen)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup oil
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 2 cups flour
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cocoa
- 1 cup chocolate chips

Method:

In a large bowl, mix together zucchini, oil and vanilla. Add in flour, sugar, salt, soda, and cocoa. Stir to combine. Mix will seem very dry (depending on how wet the zucchini is), but continue stirring until mix comes together and resembles stiff cookie dough. Fold in chocolate chips. Spread into a 9×13 baking dish, lined with aluminum foil and sprayed with cooking spray. Bake at 350°F for 30 minutes. Once cool, use foil ends to lift out of baking dish. Cut brownies into desired size, and dust with powdered sugar before serving.

Canned Zucchini

Because zucchini is a low-acid food, it can only be processed safely if acid is added. You'll probably find two recipe types for canning zucchini— pickles or relishes, and pineapple zucchini or zucchini marmalades. Be sure to use recipes from reliable sources such as Ball, the National Center for Home Food Preservation, or USU Extension. Recipes from these sources have been tested and scientifically proven to be safe.

Zucchini Relish

Yield: about 4 half-pint jars

This Recipe was taken from the Ball Blue Book. Serve with hotdogs, hamburgers, sloppy joe's, pulled pork sandwiches, or tuna salad.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups zucchini, chopped or shredded (about three medium)
- 1 cup chopped onion (about 1 medium)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped green bell pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped red bell pepper
- 2 tablespoons salt
- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups sugar
- 2 teaspoons celery seed
- 1 teaspoon mustard seed
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon turmeric (optional)
- 1 cup cider vinegar, 5% acidity
- Ball Pickle Crisp (optional)

Method:

Prep:

Wash zucchini and green and red bell peppers under cold running water; drain. Remove stems and blossom ends from zucchini. Chop or shred zucchini; measure 2 cups chopped or shredded zucchini. Peel onion and chop; measure 1 cup chopped onion. Remove stems and seeds from green and red bell peppers. Chop green bell pepper; measure $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped green bell pepper. Chop red bell pepper; measure $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped red bell pepper. Combine zucchini, onion, green pepper, and red bell pepper in a large bowl. Sprinkle salt over vegetables. Pour cold water over vegetables just to cover. Let stand 2 hours. Drain vegetables. Rinse vegetables under cold water, drain.

Cook:

Combine sugar, spices, and vinegar in a large saucepan. Bring mixture to a simmer (180°F). Add vegetables; simmer 10 minutes.

Fill:

Pack hot relish into a hot jar, leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ inch headspace. Add 1/16 teaspoon Pickle Crisp to half-pint jar, if desired. Remove air bubbles. Clean jar rim. Center lid on jar and adjust band to fingertip-tight. Place jar on the rack elevated over simmering water (180°F) in boiling-water canner. Repeat until all jars are filled.

Process:

Lower the rack into simmering water. Water must cover jars by 1 inch. Adjust heat to medium-high, cover canner and bring water to a rolling boil. Process half-pint jars 10 minutes (add 10 minutes to adjust for altitude in Utah). Turn off heat and remove cover. Let jars cool 5 minutes. Remove jars from Canner; do not retighten bands if loose. Cool 12 hours. Check seals. Label and store jars.

Pineapple Zucchini

Yield: about 8 pint jars

Use pineapple zucchini any way you would use canned pineapple. Try it baked into muffins, quick breads, or cakes. Mix it in with your fruit salad, or blended into a smoothie.

Ingredients:

- 4 quarts $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubed or shredded zucchini (about 32 small, or 2 monstrous)
- 3 cups sugar
- 46 ounces bottled unsweetened pineapple juice
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups bottled lemon juice

Method:

Prep:

Wash zucchini under cold running water; drain. Remove stem and blossom ends. Peel zucchini and cut in half lengthwise. Remove seeds. Cut zucchini into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubes or shred it using a food grater.

Cook:

Combine zucchini, sugar, pineapple juice, and lemon juice in a large saucepan. Bring mixture to a boil, stirring until sugar dissolves. Reduce heat to a simmer (180°F). Simmer 20 minutes, stirring to prevent sticking.

Fill:

Pack hot zucchini and juice into a hot jar, leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Clean jar rim. Center lid on jar and adjust band to fingertip-tight. Place jar on the rack elevated over simmering water (180°F) in boiling water canner. Repeat until all jars are filled.

Process:

Lower the rack into simmering water; water must cover jars by 1 inch. Adjust heat to medium-high, cover canner and bring water to a rolling boil. Process pint jars 15 minutes. Turn off heat and remove cover. Let jars cool 5 minutes. Remove jars from canner; do not retighten bands if loose. Cool 12 hours. Test seals. Label and store jars.

Note: Use only commercial bottled pineapple juice and bottled lemon juice in this recipe to achieve the correct pH level (acidity) for safe processing in a boiling-water canner.

Hummingbird Muffins

Ingredients:

- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 1 cup all-purpose flour

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup whole wheat flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon allspice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup mashed banana (2 ripe bananas)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pineapple zucchini, with juice
- 2 large eggs
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup plain Greek yogurt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup packed brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Method:

Preheat the oven to 300°F. Spread pecans onto a lined baking pan. Toast for 8 minutes. Remove from the oven, let cool, and then chop. Turn oven up to 350°F (177°C), then prepare muffin tin by coating with cooking spray.

Whisk the flour, baking soda, cinnamon, allspice, and salt together in a large bowl.

Whisk the rest of the cake ingredients in a medium bowl. Pour wet ingredients into dry ingredients and whisk until just. Fold in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup toasted pecans.

Fill each muffin space $\frac{3}{4}$ full, and top with remaining pecans (if icing, reserve pecan garnish for after baking). Bake for 15 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Remove muffins from tin and allow to cool completely on a wire rack.

Pineapple Yogurt Icing (optional)

Whisk together 2 tablespoons Greek yogurt, 1 cup powdered sugar, and 1 tablespoon juice from pineapple zucchini. Add more juice as needed until icing is pourable consistency.

Drizzle muffins with icing, and top with remaining pecans.

Learn More

Preserve the Harvest: Zucchini

Save Your Summer Harvest: Freezing Vegetables

4 Tips for Food Dehydrating

Pumpkin Zucchini Bread

Fresh Zucchini Salad

Cooking in Season: Summer Squash

This article was written by Marta Nielsen, Editor of Live Well Utah, Wasatch Front Marketing Assistant for USU Extension

4 Tips for Food Dehydrating



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4 TIPS FOR FOOD
DEYDRATING

Now that summer is in full swing and gardens are producing in abundance, you may be wondering what to do with all you have harvested. Maybe you've tried freezing, or even even canning, but what about dehydrating? Try these tips for dehydrating, and preserve some of that summer harvest for later use.

Dehydrating foods is a great way to save foods that you have in surplus, such as fruits and vegetables, for later use. If you preserve your own food regularly, you may already be familiar with how dehydrating works. But if you're like me, you're only experience with dehydrated foods might be store bought banana chips from your childhood! If this is the case, dehydrating might seem a little daunting. But have no fear! Here are some tips to get you started.

1. Simple and Easy

I had zero experience with dehydrating food when I set out to use the dehydrator. I was a little nervous that I'd ruin the food. But here's a secret- it's not hard! There isn't much you can do to ruin the food you are dehydrating. If it's not dry enough, simply leave it in longer. If you accidentally dried it too long, add it to a little water to gain a small amount of moisture back.

Dehydrators are easy to use and set up. Following the instructions that come with the dehydrator will help you to get started. The machine will take up little space, has a quick set up and a quick clean up. Once you have prepped your food and placed it in the dehydrator, all you really need to do is wait. Most foods dry at 140° F, but you can visit the National Center for Home Food Preservation website or read *So Easy to Preserve* from The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension to find different charts showing temperatures and times for dehydrating foods. USU Extension also has an old-but great!—handout on dehydrating, *Home Drying of Foods*.

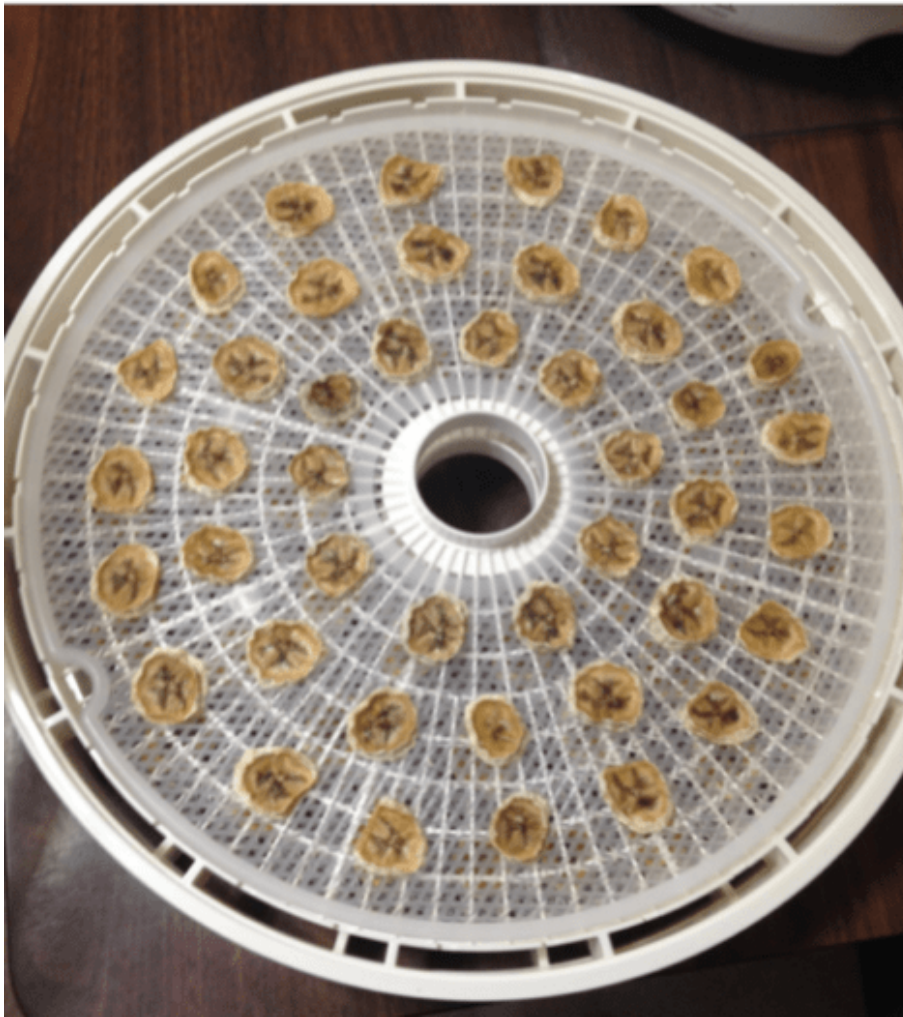
2. Proper Preparation



Before Blanching



After Blanching



Bananas dried wit no pre-treatment.

Fruits and vegetables should be washed, cored and sometimes peeled before dehydrating. Almost all vegetables need to be blanched to inactivate the enzymes that break down color and flavor during dehydrating. Fruits can be sliced or halved; some can even be left whole to dry. If you slice or cut your food up, remember to cut as evenly as possible. If the pieces are different sizes it could prevent them from drying at the same rate. Food that is cut into thin, uniform pieces will take less time to dry. Blanching is another way to speed up the drying time. When you blanch a fruit or vegetable, it can soften the outer layer which will allow the moisture to escape faster. After blanching grapes, I was a little concerned to see some of the grapes had changed color. But this is normal. So, if there is some color loss after you have blanched your food, don't panic!

Some fruits, such as apples or bananas, brown when exposed to oxygen. This can be prevented by using a pre-treatment, such as dipping the pieces in lemon juice or an ascorbic acid mixture, to stop the enzyme that causes this reaction. Pre-treatments are not required because this browning does not affect the flavor of the final product, however it can change the look of your final product.

It is important to arrange the food on the drying tray properly. Make sure the pieces do not overlap or touch, as this could cause them to dry unevenly and stick together. There also needs to be room for air circulation, so make sure not to overfill the drying tray. The amount of food you can put on a tray will vary. I fit about two sliced bananas per tray, but this could differ depending on the size of the tray or even the slices.

3. More Than Just Fruit



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*s prepped for vegetable
leather.*

Don't limit yourself! While fruit is the most common food associated with dehydrating, you can dehydrate much more than fruit. Both fruits and vegetables can be dehydrated to be used for snacking on or cooking with. They can also be used to make

fruit leathers, as well as vegetable leathers. You can find simple recipes to make these, or even get creative and experiment to make your own...whatever you are most comfortable with! Meats can be dehydrated as jerky. This can be done by following a jerky recipe or could simply be done by using pre-cut salami to make 'chips' for snacking on. Even herbs, such as basil or oregano, can be dried out, packaged and stored.

4. Patience is a Virtue

Remember to be patient. Different foods will take different amounts of time to be completely dried; some might take a few hours, while others may take a few days. Allowing the food to take as long as it needs is important to ensure it can be stored safely. The time will be well worth it once you have your delicious food, whether you choose to eat it right away or save it for later.

This article was written by Kelsey Chappell, Family and Consumer Sciences Intern, and Melanie Jewkes, Utah State University Extension associate professor, Salt Lake County

Tips On Staying Hydrated This Summer



Find out how you can stay hydrated without it feeling like a chore!

The Word on Water

Here in Utah and across the nation, the hot weather has arrived. During these summer months, you may have hydration on your mind. We know that water is necessary for carrying out our body's vital functions and that maintaining proper hydration helps keep us energized throughout the day, but sometimes drinking one glass of water after another can feel like a chore.

By learning more about your fluid needs, as well as practical ways to meet these needs, you'll be well on your way to hydration optimization during the heat of the summer! In the June issue of Food Insight published by the International Food Information Council Foundation, Kerry Robinson, RD, and Jennifer Arougheti, undergraduate dietetic student and IFIC

Foundation intern, share the following information:

How Much Water Do We Need?

According to the Institute of Medicine (IOM), healthy women need 91 ounces (2.7 liters) of water daily and healthy men need 125 ounces (3.7 liters) of water daily. In terms of the 0.5-liter water bottles commonly sold in the supermarket, women and men need about five and seven bottles, respectively. Your water needs can increase during exercise, extreme temperatures and illness. Being aware of these environmental and biological factors will help you adjust your water intake and stay hydrated.

Does It Always Have to Be Water?

You may be surprised to learn that staying hydrated does not mean drinking just water. In fact, all sorts of liquids, including milk, juice, sports drinks, tea, soda, coffee and even watery foods such as fruits and vegetables can contribute to your daily water intake. Despite popular belief, you don't have to avoid beverages containing caffeine to stay hydrated. According to a report from the IOM, although caffeine has mild diuretic effects, it does not cause dehydration. Caffeine-containing beverages contribute to your total daily water intake similar to non-caffeinated drinks.

Avoid Dehydration

Whether playing sports, resting on the beach or running errands, it's important to be mindful of the early signs of dehydration. Thirst is your first line of defense to signal that your body needs water, but that doesn't mean you should wait until you're thirsty to drink. Drink "proactively," whether thirsty or not, to ensure that your body does not reach the point of dehydration.

Actions You Can Take TODAY to Stay Hydrated and Healthy:

Drink throughout the day. Sipping liquids throughout the day effectively rehydrates your body and enhances water retention. Pick a drink of appeal. If you don't like water, many other

drinks (milk, juice and flavored water, just to name a few) can help keep you hydrated. Chances are, if you enjoy the beverage, you'll drink more of it!

Fit hydration into your schedule.

Stock beverages in convenient and accessible places, such as in your car, by your bed or on your desk. This way, there's no excuse not to sip throughout the day.

Think outside the glass.

Foods contain water too! Twenty percent of your daily water intake comes from food, so choose "watery foods," such as lettuce, watermelon and grapefruit to help keep your body hydrated.

When it comes to hydration, many types of liquids and watery foods can help you meet your fluid needs. What's your favorite way to stay hydrated?

This article was written by Margie Memmott.



Margie Memmott is an Extension Associate Professor for Utah State University and has been serving families and communities for over 23 years. She earned degrees in Family and Consumer

Sciences from BYU and USU and loves to teach youth and adults valuable life skills. "What a great reward when others adopt these principles and apply the tools to improve their everyday lives." In her spare time Margie enjoys creative textiles/sewing, crocheting, music, technology, four wheeling in the 'RZR' and most of all, being with her family.
