

Zucchini Chocolate Cake

Using a food processor to shred zucchini, I bake up this lightly sweet cake often. There's just the right amount of chocolate in every bite.

—Leon Kingsley
Marshfield, Massachusetts

- 1/2 cup butter or margarine, softened
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1-3/4 cups sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup baking cocoa
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/2 cup sour milk*
- 2 cups shredded peeled zucchini
- 1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips

In a mixing bowl, cream the butter, oil and sugar. Beat in the eggs and vanilla. Combine the flour, cocoa, baking soda, baking powder, cinnamon and cloves; add to the creamed mixture alternately with milk. Mix well. Stir in zucchini. Pour into a greased 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. baking pan. Sprinkle with the chocolate chips. Bake at 350° for 40-45 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack. **Yield:** 12-

Inside-Out Stuffed Peppers

Our daughters Kimberly and Kristina don't like the way the meat and rice mixture is usually stuffed inside big green peppers. So Kristina added a chopped pepper to the other ingredients in a casserole.

—Darlene Markel, Sublimity, Oregon

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 can (16 ounces) stewed tomatoes, cut up
- 1 large green pepper, chopped
- 1/2 cup uncooked long grain rice
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup (4 ounces) shredded cheddar cheese

In a skillet, brown beef; drain. Transfer to a greased 2-qt. casserole. Add the next eight ingredients. Cover and bake at 350° for 1 hour or until rice is tender. Uncover and sprinkle with the cheese; return to the oven until cheese is melted, about 5 minutes. **Yield:** 4-6 servings.

Stuffed Zucchini

(Pictured at left)

An abundance of squash from my garden inspired me to make up this recipe. It's now a family favorite.

—Marjorie Roberts, West Chazy, New York

- 1-1/2 pounds lean ground beef
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 large green pepper, chopped
- 1 jalapeno pepper, minced
- 1-1/4 cups soft bread crumbs
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 tablespoon dried parsley flakes
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 2 cans (8 ounces each) tomato sauce, divided
- 2 medium tomatoes, coarsely chopped
- 4 to 5 medium zucchini
- 2 cups (8 ounces) shredded mozzarella cheese

In a large bowl, combine the first 11 ingredients and one can of tomato sauce; mix well. Stir in tomatoes. Halve zucchini lengthwise; scoop out seeds. Fill with meat mixture; place in two 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. baking dishes. Spoon remaining tomato sauce over each. Bake, uncovered, at 375° for 45 minutes or until the zucchini is tender. Sprinkle with cheese during the last few minutes of baking. **Yield:** 8-10 servings.

Italian Zucchini

I enjoy planning and preparing daily meals. Cooking is a great way to relax at the end of the day. This Italian-style side dish is one I make often. Made with fresh zucchini, tomatoes and onion, it's as good for you as it is good to eat!

—Christopher Gordon
Springfield, Missouri

Uses less fat, sugar or salt. Includes Nutritional Analysis and Diabetic Exchanges.

- 4 cups sliced zucchini
- 1 medium onion, sliced into rings
- 2 medium tomatoes, sliced
- 1 lemon, quartered
- 1-1/2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
- 3/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 tablespoon butter or margarine

In a greased 2-1/2-qt. casserole, layer one-third of the zucchini, onion and tomatoes. Squeeze one lemon quarter over all. Sprinkle with 1/2 teaspoon Italian seasoning and 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes. Repeat layers. Dot with butter. Squeeze remaining lemon over all. Cover and bake at 350° for 1 hour or until vegetables are tender. Serve immediately. **Yield:** 4 servings. **Nutritional Analysis:** One serving (prepared with margarine)