



HCSF Newsletter

July
2011

Summer is in full swing and we've got lots of great ideas to **beat the heat** with kid-friendly **water games**. Check out our new feature called **"What is it & what do I do with it?"** Up first: **Zucchini!** Rainy day has everyone stuck inside? Why not try out our recipe for **homemade pickles** – no canning or special equipment required!

WHAT IS IT & WHAT DO I DO WITH IT?

Zucchini is a summer squash. There are green and yellow zucchini. The inside is a pale greenish-white and has a delicate, sweet flavor. The thin outer skin is also edible.



When is zucchini in season?

Zucchini is in season from late May through August in the Midwest. Both varieties are best when they are about six to eight inches long and 2 inches in diameter. Larger sized zucchini are best saved for zucchini bread (see recipe on the next page).

How do I store it?

Store zucchini in a plastic bag in the refrigerator crisper drawer for up to four to five days. Do not wash until just before you are ready to use it.

Can I freeze it?

Yes! To freeze, slice zucchini into rounds, place them on cookie sheets until frozen and then seal the slices in airtight containers or baggies. Frozen zucchini can be kept for ten to twelve months.

Better yet - you can coarse grate it and freeze it in ziplock bags - 2 cups in each bag to make zucchini bread. You can add shredded zucchini to soups, stews and spaghetti sauce throughout the year as well as using it for bread.

How do I prepare it?

Check out all our **zippy zucchini recipes** on page 2!

ATTACK OF THE "KILLER" KIDDOS!

Sharks are no match for a pool of players in this fun game. Players slip and splash all over the wading pool as they attempt to defy the laws of buoyancy. Adult supervision is a MUST!

What You Need

- Bag of Balloons
- Permanent Markers
- Kiddie Pool



Instructions

1. Blow up a dozen or so balloons and draw shark faces on them with permanent markers.
2. Fill the kiddie pool with water, add the balloons, and watch the game begin as the children try to sit on the balloons and pop them.
3. The player who squashes the most sharks wins. However, keeping score may fall by the wayside as the sittin', slippin', and slidin' gets into full gear.

Note: Popped balloons are a choking hazard; discard the pieces *as soon as the game ends*.

WATER RELAY

This family favorite is always a big hit at backyard picnics and parties.



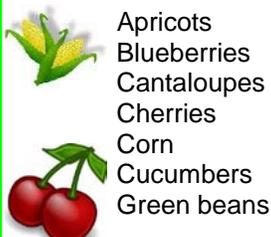
What You Need: Two buckets filled with water, two empty milk jugs, two sponges



To start, split your group into two teams. Give each team a bucket of water, an empty plastic milk jug and a large sponge. Place the buckets on one end of the yard with sponges in the water. Put the milk jugs at the opposite end.

Once the game starts, each player grabs the soaked sponge and runs to the jug to squeeze as much of the water into it as possible. Then they run back to the water bucket and the next player takes their turn. The first team to fill the jug wins!

Eat Fresh! Fruits & veggies at their best this month:



Apricots
Blueberries
Cantaloupes
Cherries
Corn
Cucumbers
Green beans

Peaches
Plums
Strawberries
Tomatoes
Watermelons
Yellow squash
Zucchini



Zucchini Bread



Three easy steps and you'll be enjoying homemade bread!

- 1 cup brown sugar
 - ½ cup egg substitute (or 2 eggs)
 - ¼ cup canola oil & ¼ cup applesauce
 - 2 tsp vanilla extract
 - 2 cups grated zucchini (drained)
 - 1 cup whole wheat flour
 - 1 cup all purpose white flour (or 2 cups if not using whole wheat flour)
 - ½ tsp salt
 - 2 tsp baking soda & 1 tsp baking powder
 - 2 tsp cinnamon
1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Coat a 9- by-5 inch loaf pan with cooking spray.
 2. Mix brown sugar, egg substitute (or eggs) oil, applesauce, and vanilla in a medium bowl. Stir in zucchini. Combine flour, salt, baking soda, baking powder and cinnamon in a large bowl. Stir the wet ingredients into the dry and stir until just combined. Transfer the batter to the prepared pan.
 3. Bake until golden brown and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, 50 minutes to 1 hour. Cool in the pan for 10 minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack. Let cool at least 1 hour before slicing.

Zucchini Boats



Kids & adults will love these!

- 1 pound sweet Italian turkey sausage with casing removed, crumbled
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 celery stalk, chopped
- 1/3 cup plain bread crumbs
- ¼ cup egg substitute or 1 egg
- 1 Tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 4 large zucchini, halved lengthwise with the seeds scooped out
- 1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce

Preheat oven to 350° F. In a skillet over medium heat, cook sausage until browned and cooked through, about 10 minutes. With slotted spoon, remove the sausage to a large bowl. Drain off all but 1 Tablespoon drippings. Add the onion and the celery to the pan, cooking 3 minutes. Add the celery and onion to the sausage. Stir in the bread crumbs, egg substitute, parsley and black pepper and mix until well combined. Place zucchini boats on baking dish and fill evenly with meat mixture. Spoon tomato sauce over each half, cover with tin foil and bake until zucchini is tender and meat mixture is heated through, about 30 minutes.

Zucchini - Cheddar Mash

1 Tablespoon canola or olive oil
2-3 medium zucchini, sliced
1 medium onion, chopped

¼ teaspoon salt
½ cup grated cheddar cheese



We'll eat anything with cheese! 😊

Heat oil in a large non-stick skillet over medium heat. Add zucchini and onion; stirring to coat them with oil. Cover pan and cook, stirring occasionally until very soft and lightly browned, 12 to 15 minutes. Add salt and cook 1 minute more. Transfer to a medium bowl. Mash with a potato masher until chunky. Stir in cheese and serve immediately.



PERFECT PICKLES!

Pickle lovers who don't want to fuss with canning will find this recipe simply perfect. Once done, they'll keep for several weeks in the fridge — assuming there are any left.

Ingredients

- 2 ½ quarts water
- ¾ cup kosher salt
- ½ cup white vinegar
- Pickling cucumbers (enough to fill a 1-gallon jar or crock)
- 4 - 5 fresh dill sprigs and 1 teaspoon of dill seeds
- 4 - 5 crushed garlic cloves (smash each clove with the flat side of a knife and peel off the papery skin – ADULTS only please).



Instructions

1. Boil the water, add the salt and the vinegar, and stir until the salt is dissolved. Let the brine cool.
2. Gently scrub the cucumbers clean, especially the blossom ends. Alternating layers pack the cucumbers, dill, and garlic into a 1-gallon jar or crock. Leave 1 or 2 inches of empty space near the top.
3. Pour the brine into the jar. To keep the cucumbers submerged, weigh them down with a heavy glass.
4. Drape a clean dish towel over the jar and let it sit on the counter for one to three days, until the pickles taste the way you like them. Transfer the pickles and brine to smaller jars and refrigerate them.