



This is one of my favorite go-to snacks. I've been known to eat it for breakfast, lunch or dinner.

Zucchini Snack

We eat a lot of zucchini. We don't grow it on The Farm because the plants spread too much for our suburban plot to handle, but luckily zucchini is readily available year round, either at farmers' markets or road-side stands, the store, or from your friends who do grow zucchini and are overwhelmed with produce by mid-summer.

Here's the beauty of this snack. It is fast. It is guilt-free. It's a vegetable! And the same recipe will work with any number of vegetables, including eggplant, broccoli, yellow squash, and asparagus. Potatoes would be okay (with a little guilt added). Even polenta rounds! Try it, and let me know what you think! Serves 1 or 2.

Ingredients

1 medium zucchini (pick a long thin one) - think of chips

1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese

A drizzle of extra virgin olive oil to lightly coat the zucchini pieces

Salt and pepper

Crushed red peppers (optional) - a few shakes

Line a baking sheet with non-stick foil. Put the baking sheet into the oven, and preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. You want that tray to be nice and hot when you are ready to make the zucchini.

Prepare the zucchini by washing and drying and cutting into thin rounds, all approximately the same thickness. I aim for just less than 1/4 inch. When all of your rounds are cut, put them into a bowl and drizzle the zucchini lightly with extra virgin olive oil, a small sprinkle of salt (remember, the cheese is salty), pepper to taste, and the crushed red peppers if using. Toss so that the zucchini is coated evenly.

Then add the parmesan cheese and toss again, so that both sides of the "chip" are cheesy. Don't be concerned if you have extra cheese in the bottom of your bowl.

When the oven is at temperature, remove the hot baking sheet and lay the zucchini on the foil in one even layer. Try not to overlap. If you have any extra cheese in your bowl, sprinkle it across the zucchini. You're welcome to add extra if you like.

Bake for 15 to 20 minutes, depending on your oven. I use convection heat, so my zucchini takes about 16 minutes for the cheese to appear crispy golden brown. Start watching at 15 minutes and let the cheese be your guide. Golden, brown, delicious parmesan cheese is a sign that it's time to snack.

Serve on a plate or in a bowl. Eat with a fork or with your hands. (It shouldn't be greasy.) Besides being a great snack, this is a light, tasty side dish for steak and chicken. It's a great use for those abundant zucchini crops, and as noted above, if zucchini isn't your thing, give it a whirl with broccoli florets and stems, asparagus, or whatever entices you. No guilt! Eat up!

April 18, 2016