

# Zucchini

**GRADE**  
**2-3**

**Month: September**

**Time Required: 30 minutes**

**Alternative Tastings: Tomato, Cucumber, Squash**

## Lesson Goals

- Students will increase their knowledge of fruits and vegetables.
- Students will learn to try new fruits and vegetables and increase their preference for them.
- Students will learn that their peers like to eat fruits and vegetables.
- Students will learn how to ask their parents/caregivers for the fruits and vegetables tasted in class.

## Lesson Objectives

- Students will recognize zucchini as a type of summer squash.
- Students will be able to describe four key flavors to create a dressing.

## Materials

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 prepared "Season Signs"   | <input type="checkbox"/> Tablespoons (for educator to use)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Printed recipe cards; one per student   | <input type="checkbox"/> Various dressing ingredients (see Dressing Ingredient Options chart attached) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Whole zucchini (or image of zucchini)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Paper plates and forks  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prepared bag of spiralized zucchini noodles (or demonstrate this during the lesson) | <input type="checkbox"/> Tongs for serving zucchini noodles  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4-5 small mason jars with lids  | <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning wipes or spray and rags  |

## Preparation

- Process a mixture of green and yellow zucchini with a spiralizer to make noodles. Portion into food storage bags, one for each class.
- Select 8 dressing ingredients, using the Dressing Ingredient Options chart (attached).
- Write/draw labels to prepare four "season signs" for the Engage Activity: Winter, Summer, Spring, Fall.

## Recommended Books

- "Our School Garden!" by Rick Swann
- "How a Seed Grows" by Helene Jordan
- "Zora's Zucchini" by Katherine Pryor
- "Carlos and the Squash Plant" by Jan Romero Stevens

## Standards Connection

This lesson supports the following Iowa Core standards.

**Health Education**  
[Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8](#)

**Science** Second grade - [2-LS4-1](#).  
LS4.D: Biodiversity

Third grade - [3-LS4-3](#).  
LS4.C Adaptation

## Lesson Checklist

- Physical Activity
- Tasting
- Voting
- "Asking" Discussion
- Newsletters, Bingo cards, Stickers, Incentives
- Science Connection: Biodiversity (2nd) & habitats (3rd)

## Engage

### 1. Introduction: 2 minutes

*The “Introduction” section is a time to introduce yourself, recap previous lessons, establish norms, or introduce the day's lesson.*

In each of the four corners of the room, post a paper sign, denoting each of the four seasons (summer, fall, winter, spring). Set up “the ingredient station” at the front or center of the room, where all students can see it.

If this is your first lesson of the year, introduce yourself to the class and to Pick A Better Snack. Share with students, *When I come to your classroom every month, we're going to have fun trying foods together and learn about each other. So here's something I want to learn about you... (have students stand up in a circle)*

### 2. Engage Activity: 6 minutes

*The “Engage Activity” section has two purposes: 1) to activate students' prior knowledge and 2) to engage every student.*

#### 4 Corners Activity:

*What is your favorite season? Think in your head - is it summer, fall, winter, or spring (can put fingers up to temples and close eyes)? When I say the magic word, “zucchini,” I want you to quietly walk to the sign that lists your favorite season - either summer, fall, winter, or spring. When you get to your spot, take turns sharing why you picked that season as your favorite season.*

- Give students time to think and make a decision; instruct them to move to their preference (or stand somewhere in the middle) and pair-share with others in their group. Ask one student from each group to share with the class.
- Remind students to make the decision for themselves and to not be swayed by where others stand.

Celebrate each “season” group with a “whoosh clap.”

## Explore

### 3. Experiential Learning: 12 minutes

*This is a time for students to familiarize themselves with what you'll be tasting. The best way to do this is through a hands-on or exploratory activity.*

Seat students in these 4 small groups, where they can work together (opportunity for 3 deep breaths).

*Summer is the season when we grow and eat summer squash. Show photo of a variety of summer squash. Why is summer the favorite time for vegetables like summer squash to grow in Iowa? Probably some of the same reasons why some humans like summer, too. Discuss warm temperatures, lots of sunlight, rainwater, no snow, etc. Today, we're going to taste a type of summer squash called a zucchini. What are we tasting today (choral response: “zucchini!”). Show an image or whole zucchini to the class. Zucchini might grow in Iowa in other seasons, but it will survive and thrive best in summer. Today we are going to taste fresh zucchini salad AND make a dressing to go with it.*

## Explore (cont'd)

### Salad Dressing Activity:

Have several ingredients on display in the middle of the room, “the ingredient station.” Explain, *dressing has a balance of four key flavors:*

- *Rich (olive oil), salty (sea salt, soy sauce), sour (lemon juice, mustard), sweet (dried fruit or honey)*
- *The key to making a delicious dressing is balancing these flavors based on what you like.*

Explain:

- *In groups, you’ll be writing your own dressing recipe. You should pick 4 ingredients as a group, and write them on your recipe cards: one rich flavor, one salty flavor, one sour flavor and one sweet flavor. Be open-minded and make sure everyone in your group is included in the decision.*
- *Once you’ve each created your own salad dressing recipe and written it on your cards, one person from your group will come up to me to get your group’s ingredients at the ingredient station.*
  - You may want to assign a group leader who will come up to gather ingredients.
  - Educator will measure ingredients into a mason jar for each of the 4 groups.
- *When you have your jar of ingredients, you’ll - keep it closed!- and take turns shaking the jar as a group, to get it all mixed together.*
- *Then, we’ll sample it with fresh zucchini!*

Move around the room with the help of the classroom teacher to support group decision-making and writing. As students are ready to gather ingredients at the ingredients station, you will fill their mason jars using the following salad dressing formula:

- Dressing = 2 Fat + 1 Sour + Small Pinch/Dash of Flavorings (Salty and Sweet)
- Example Dressing = 2 tbsp olive oil + 1 tbsp lemon juice + pinch of salt + dash of honey

Serving: Back at their tables, groups will take turns shaking their jars until all ingredients are mixed. Pass out small paper plates, forks and a few fresh zucchini noodles. Note: As students wait for their samples, encourage them to come up with a name for their dressing, and write the name on their ingredient cards. Dress the students’ zucchini noodles with some of their group’s dressing (keep it light in case they don’t love it!)

### **4. Tasting Activity: 3 minutes**

*The “Tasting Activity” section is when students get to try the fruit or vegetable. Don’t forget to review your food tasting norms (for example, “don’t yuck my yum”).*

Before you pass out any zucchini, be sure to review your brave tasting rules (for example, don’t yuck my yum, we all try together, etc.). As students receive their samples, ask them to use their senses to learn about zucchini while they wait.

## Reflect

### 5. Voting Activity: 2 minutes

*This is a time for students to give their opinion on what they tried!*

As students taste the zucchini and dressing, have them vote with their thumbs. Observe their voting and offer positive reinforcement regarding the Brave Taster Rules. If a student dislikes the tasting, perhaps ask what they would change about it.

### 6. Reflection: 5 minutes

*Reflection is one of the most important processes for students to process and retain new information or experiences. Give students an opportunity to reflect on what they've learned or tried in your lesson. This is an excellent place for students to practice the "Asking Discussion."*

#### Choral Response:

*I'm going to ask a question and you're going to quietly think to yourself. When I say our magic word, "zucchini," you can say your answer aloud. Let's practice...*

- *What month is it? (September)*
- *Whose class am I in?*
- *What vegetable did we try today? (Zucchini)*
- *What did you create to taste with your zucchini? (Dressing)*
- *How many flavors did you put into your dressing? (Four)*
- *What season does zucchini grow best in Iowa? (Summer)*

#### Asking Discussion:

*Raise your hand if you're excited to go home and tell your family about tasting zucchini.*

- *Ask a student with a raised hand: if you wanted to try this at home, how might you ask your grown-ups?*
- *You might also ask additional questions like, where could you buy zucchini? What is something else you remember about zucchini?*

\*Leave newsletters, incentives, stickers, and BINGO sheets with the teachers to pass out.

# Dressing Ingredient Options

RICH FLAVORS (fats)	SOUR FLAVORS	SALTY FLAVORS	SWEET FLAVORS
Olive oil Sesame oil Canola oil Yogurt Avocado	Lemon/lime Orange Rice vinegar Apple cider vinegar Balsamic vinegar Mustard	Table salt Kosher salt Sea salt Soy sauce	Honey Raisins Other dried fruit Apple slices or other fresh fruit
**Select and offer 2 ingredients under each flavor, to allow for student led decision-making			

My Dressing Recipe is called: \_\_\_\_\_

Ingredients

Rich Flavor: \_\_\_\_\_

Salty Flavor: \_\_\_\_\_

Sour Flavor: \_\_\_\_\_

Sweet Flavor: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions

Step 1. Select 4 ingredients

Step 2. Combine ingredients in a jar

Step 3. Put the lid on tight, and shake the jar

Step 4. Pour dressing over vegetables, like zucchini noodles!

Step 5. Eat it up!

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP. It was developed by the Iowa Department of Public Health in partnership with the Iowa Department of Human Services. December 2020



My Dressing Recipe is called: \_\_\_\_\_

Ingredients

Rich Flavor: \_\_\_\_\_

Salty Flavor: \_\_\_\_\_

Sour Flavor: \_\_\_\_\_

Sweet Flavor: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions

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## Additional Materials

### Physical Activity

[“Stories in Motion: A Visit to the Vegetable Patch”](#) (page 59)

More ideas for physical activity are available at <https://idph.iowa.gov/inn/play-your-way/brain-breaks>.

### What You Need to Know About Zucchini

- You can eat all parts of summer squash – skin, seeds, and flesh – raw or cooked.
- Zucchini is usually dark green in color.
- Choose zucchini that has smooth, shiny skin and feels heavy for its size. Ripe zucchini is firm and gives slightly to pressure.
- Zucchini can be stored for one week in the refrigerator in a plastic bag. Wash before using.
- Once zucchini has been cut up, it can last for three days in a sealed bag or container in the refrigerator.

### Facts About Zucchini

- Zucchini is a warm season crop. It has a short growing season compared to melons and cucumbers. Once the fruit starts to grow, it can grow one inch per day.
- Zucchini is a summer squash. It is different from winter squash because it is harvested and eaten before it matures, so the rind is soft. It is the most common summer squash.
- Zucchini is best when picked small (about 6-8” long).
- Zucchini is considered a vegetable in our diet, but botanically it is the immature fruit of the plant.
- A zucchini plant has large, dark green leaves.
- Zucchini originated in Italy, but most squash varieties came to America from Europe.
- The Native Americans introduced squash as one of the “Three Sisters.” The three native plants used for agriculture were corn, beans and squash.

### Health Connection

- Zucchini is a good source of Vitamin C. Reinforce by putting up your defense shield (cross arms out in front of chest). Zucchini helps to ward off germs and keep us healthy.

### References and Resources

<https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/produce-item/zucchini-2/>

<https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/seasonal-produce-guide/zucchini>

[https://harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/documents/Summer/021712/ED\\_Zucchini\\_Newsletter\\_Final.pdf](https://harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/documents/Summer/021712/ED_Zucchini_Newsletter_Final.pdf)

<https://hortnews.extension.iastate.edu/2003/4-1-2003/squash.html>

<https://homeguides.sfgate.com/zucchini-plants-start-vine-56658.html>

<https://www.gardenguides.com/80661-train-zucchini-vine-trellis.html>

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