

Snacking and Cooking with Warm-Season Produce from Childcare Production Gardens

Local Foods: Childcare Center Production Gardens 5

This publication includes simple recipes that childcare center cooks and educators can use to engage children in snacking and cooking with fresh warm-season fruits and vegetables from on-site production gardens and elsewhere. This is the fifth of eight publications about childcare center production gardens.



The first publication in this series, *Growing and Cooking Fruits and Vegetables at Childcare Centers* (<http://content.ces.ncsu.edu/childcare-center-production-gardens-1-growing-and-cooking-fruits-and-vegetables-at-childcare-cente/>), provides age-appropriate suggestions for engaging young children in food preparation.

The third publication in the series, *Growing Warm-Season Fruits and Vegetables in the Childcare Production Garden* (<http://content.ces.ncsu.edu/childcare-center-production-gardens-3-growing-warm-season-fruits-and-vegetables-in-the-childcare-p/>), shares easy-to-grow, child-friendly, summer season fruits and vegetables suitable for a childcare production garden.

This publication provides a set of simple recipes for snacks and prepared dishes incorporating production garden produce for children to enjoy.

Salad Recipes

MELON SALAD

Serves 12 to 14

- 1 cantaloupe
- 1 honeydew melon
- 1 small watermelon
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- Fresh mint leaves for garnish

Cut any combination of melons into cubes or balls. Combine fruit in a large serving bowl. In a small dish, combine honey and lemon juice. Stir well. Pour over melons and toss to mix. Garnish with mint leaves. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

CUCUMBER, TOMATO, AND BASIL SALAD

Serves 6 to 8

- 2 cucumbers, sliced into rounds or chopped
- 2 large tomatoes, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 cup basil leaves, chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- Salt and pepper

Gently toss all ingredients together in a bowl, add salt and pepper to taste, and serve.



Searching for ripe tomatoes.



Enjoying fresh cucumbers from the garden.

Dip and Salsa Recipes

CUCUMBER DIP

Yield: 2 cups

- ½ cup plain yogurt
- ½ cup light sour cream
- 1 cup chopped cucumber
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
- 1 tablespoon grated garlic (optional)
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper

Combine yogurt, sour cream, cucumber, dill, garlic, salt, and pepper. Serve with crackers, tortilla chips, carrot sticks, or cucumbers that are sliced into sticks or rounds.

FRESH TOMATO SALSA

Yield: About 3 cups. Easily scale the recipe up to make additional servings.

- 1 fresh tomato, diced
- ½ medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- 1 lime

Combine chopped vegetables and cumin in a bowl. Cut lime in half and squeeze juice over top of the mixture. Cover and refrigerate 30 minutes to 24 hours to allow flavors to blend.

FRUIT SALSA

Serves 20 to 24

- 3 pint containers of raspberries
- 3 pint containers of blackberries
- 1 pint container of strawberries, stems removed and diced

Use whatever fruit combination you have on hand to mix and match.

Mix all ingredients in a medium-large mixing bowl until well combined. Allow to chill in the refrigerator for 30 to 60 minutes. Serve with cinnamon chips or graham crackers.

Tip: To create your own tortilla chips, cut whole wheat tortillas into wedges, lay on a baking sheet, and bake at 350°F for approximately 12 minutes.

Cooked Vegetable Recipes

ROASTED GREEN BEANS

Serves 4 to 6

- 1½ pound fresh green beans
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 400°F. Toss green beans with olive oil; add salt and pepper to taste. Arrange in an even layer on a foil lined baking sheet and roast in the oven for about 10 minutes.



Organizing diverse ingredients for Eggplant Pizza. *Photo credit Rosalind Blair*

EGGPLANT PIZZA

Serves 4 to 6

- 1 large eggplant, cut into ¼ inch thick round slices
- 1 teaspoon oregano or other herb from the garden, or Italian seasoning
- 1 cup pizza sauce or Fresh Tomato Sauce (see recipe pg. 3)
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella
- 1 ounce pepperoni, sliced
- Salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 400°F. Spread the pizza sauce over the eggplant slices, and season with herbs and salt and pepper to taste. Top the eggplant with cheese and pepperoni. Roast the eggplant pizzas until they just start to turn tender, about 15 to 20 minutes.

ROASTED OKRA

Serves 4 to 6

- 20 fresh okra pods, tops removed and sliced ¾ inch thick
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 teaspoons black pepper

Preheat oven to 425°F. Place okra in a bowl and mix lightly with oil, salt, and pepper. Arrange okra slices in one layer on a foil lined baking sheet. Bake about 10 minutes or until lightly browned.



Preparing Eggplant Pizza. *Photo credit Rosalind Blair*

Cooked Vegetable Recipes (Continued)

ZUCCHINI MINI MUFFINS

Makes about 24 small muffins

- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup packed dark brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground allspice
- ¾ cup shredded zucchini (1 medium zucchini)
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten

Preheat oven to 400°F. Combine dry ingredients (first six ingredients) in a large bowl. Combine wet ingredients (zucchini and remaining ingredients) in a small bowl. Add the zucchini mixture to the flour mixture and stir lightly—do not over mix. Divide batter into small muffin cups lined with muffin papers. Bake at 400°F for 10 minutes. Confirm doneness when an inserted toothpick comes out clean.

ZUCCHINI FRITTATA

Serves 10 to 12

- 1 pound new potatoes
- 2 ounces butter
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 zucchinis, thinly sliced
- 8 eggs
- 3 ounces Parmesan cheese, finely grated
- 1 tablespoon fresh mint leaves, chopped
- ½ teaspoon pepper

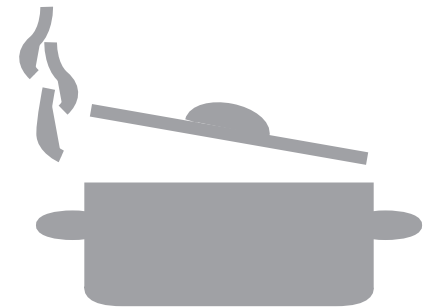
Boil potatoes for 10 min or until soft; let them cool, then cut them in half. This can be done ahead of time and the potatoes stored in the refrigerator until ready to use. Melt butter in pan, add onion, and cook until soft. Add zucchinis and cook 5 minutes. Stir in the potatoes and cook another 5 minutes until zucchinis are soft. Crack eggs into the bowl and add cheese, mint, and pepper. Whisk together with a fork. Pour the eggs over the mixture in the pan and turn the heat down as low as possible. Cook about 5 minutes or until eggs are set. Serve warm or at room temperature.

FRESH TOMATO SAUCE

Yield: about 3 cups. Easily scale the recipe up to make additional servings.

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 2 pounds whole ripe tomatoes, chopped

Warm the oil in a large pan over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic, cover, and cook for about 4 minutes until the mixture is soft but not browned. Add the tomatoes, reduce the heat, cover, and cook for about 15 minutes or until the tomatoes have collapsed. Remove from the heat. Use on pizzas or reheat before serving.



Carefully grating zucchini. Photo credit Rosalind Blair



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