

**Pan-Sauteed then Oven Finished
OR Just Grilled Zucchini
with Optional Toppings
—Serves 4—**

Ingredients:

- 4 medium zucchinis, about ½ pound each (Save the giant zucchini for another recipe)
- Oil (a high heat oil like avocado is better for the pan sautéing. Olive oil is fine for the grill even though I prefer avocado oil.)

For Pan or Grill Preparation:

1. Slice off the stem end of the zucchini and cut it in half lengthwise.
2. Sprinkle each half with ½ teaspoon salt. (The salt removes excess water from the zucchini—no mushy zuke here! You'll rinse it off or pat it later.) Let the zucchini halves sit for 15-30 minutes while you prepare your topping.
3. After 15-30 minutes, quickly rinse off the salt and pat the zucchini halves dry. You can also just wipe the salt off the zucchini. Don't you love options?
4. If using the oven: Heat oven to 450 °.
5. **For both Oven or Grill:** With a sharp paring knife, score the flat cut surface of the zucchini about ¾" deep making pretty diamonds. If you're grilling, scroll down to "For Grilled Zucchini.")
6. **For Pan Sautéing:** Coat the bottom of a 12" oven-safe skillet (cast-iron or Hexclad are especially good for this purpose) with just enough avocado or another high heat oil to coat the bottom of the pan until it's shimmering. Place zucchini flat side down in a single layer. Adjust the heat to sear and caramelize the zucchini without burning. Watch it cook for five minutes making sure it doesn't burn. Don't walk away. You have been warned!
7. After 5 minutes in the pan, immediately place the pan in a 450°F oven to roast for 25–30 minutes or until the zucchini are completely soft.
8. Transfer zucchini to paper towel lined plate or a tea towel and blot excess oil from the soft zucchini halves.
9. **For Grilled Zucchini:**
 - Lightly brush the scored cut half of each zucchini with a high heat oil such as avocado oil. The oil should lightly coat the surface and should not be dripping. Drips burn.
 - Transfer the zucchini to the grill, flat side down and cook 2 minutes.
 - Rotate the zucchini and cook 2 more minutes.

- Rotate it one last time. If you are using the miso maple glaze, you can brush it on the flat half of the zucchini for the last two minutes.
10. Transfer to a serving plate and top with one of the following toppings.

Zucchini Toppings

Miso Maple Glaze-3 ingredients!

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons white miso
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup (Use the real stuff, please!). Honey is also good but has a different flavor.
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar, aka rice wine vinegar. If you don't have rice vinegar, use white.

Preparation:

- Mix the three ingredients. If grilling, brush on the flat scored zucchini halves the last two minutes. If pan sautéing, pour the sauce over the zucchini once it is out of the oven.

Fresh Tomato Sauce

Ingredients:

- 3-4 large ripe tomatoes (Ripe flavorful tomatoes are essential for this sauce.)
- 1 medium shallot, peeled and finely minced (That's one clove/hunk of shallot, not two halves.)
- 1 tablespoon good quality white wine vinegar or champagne vinegar. Use whatever vinegar you have that you like. I've also made this with balsamic vinegar, and it was fabulous.
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley
- Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation:

- Combine all ingredients. Allow to sit for at least 30 minutes for flavors to meld.

Note on “fresh”. You can certainly use fresh ripe tomatoes with peel. But you can do the peeling, learn a useful kitchen skill, and end up with a better textured sauce if you peel the tomatoes. If you like that sort of thing.

To peel tomatoes (or peaches! which don’t require cutting an X)

1. Bring a large pot of water to a full boil. Have a big bowl of ice water next to the stove.
2. Score a one-inch X, about ¼” deep, in the bottom of each tomato.
3. Using a slotted spoon, lower the tomato (or peach) into the boiling water for 30-45 seconds.
4. Using the same slotted spoon, immediately remove the tomatoes and place them in the ice bath to stop the cooking. The peel comes right off as you gently remove it. Isn’t that fun!
5. Peel the tomatoes and cut them in half.
6. Using a spoon, scoop the seeds from the tomatoes, then dice them into ½ inch pieces.
7. Place in a bowl and toss gently together with the other ingredients.

Ricotta Herb

Ingredients:

- 1 cup ricotta (Whole milk ricotta tastes better. A lot better.)
- 2-3 tablespoons chopped fresh herbs (basil, oregano, dill, parsley, cilantro etc.)
- 1 tablespoon capers, drained and chopped (optional)
- 1 ½ teaspoons lemon juice (optional)
- ½ teaspoon grated lemon zest (yellow part only) (optional)
- Cooked pasta (really optional but you could have a meal!)

Preparation:

1. Mix everything you’re using together and place on top of zucchini.