



Summer veggies and what to do w/ them:

Zucchini

- Summer squashes are picked with soft, edible skin.
- Named "summer squash" due to their short shelf life compared to hard-shelled pumpkins.
- Zucchini is versatile: ideal for frying, sautéing, steaming, grilling, or stewing.
- In late spring and early summer, squash blossoms are available at farmers markets and are excellent for deep-frying.
- Zucchini is one of the best grilled summer vegetables: salt, sweat, and caramelize on the grill.
- For a simple spaghetti sauce: simmer zucchini rounds with extra virgin olive oil, cherry tomatoes, chopped chili pepper, and garden basil.

Cucumber

- Defined by three words: crisp, crunchy, cool.
- Versatile uses:
 - Shaved thin for a sesame-flecked Japanese quick pickle.
 - Combined with juicy tomatoes in a Tuscan panzanella.
- Ideal for summer dishes:
 - Base for vegetable soup like gazpacho.
 - Cooling gin-lime spritzer.
- Keep the seeds for the umami taste.
- Adds crunch to:

- Mediterranean chickpea salad.
- Asian cucumber salad
- Sauce-friendly dairy like yogurt tzatziki sauce.
- Pairs well with fresh green herbs: mint, chive, and dill.

Corn

- King of late summer vegetables in the USA.
- Versatile uses beyond boiled corn-on-the-cob:
 - Grill corn with husk on to steam cook the kernels.
 - Make Cajun corn chowder to balance the sweetness of corn with cayenne.
 - Sear sea scallops and serve on fresh-corn polenta.
 - Endless options for this sweet summer vegetable.

Eggplant

- Comes in various shapes, sizes, and colors:
 - Thai eggplants: small, round, green.
 - Italian eggplants: oval-shaped, burgundy purple.
 - Japanese eggplants: slender, bright violet.
- Versatile cooking methods: grilling, frying, sautéing, baking.
- Recommended to "weep" (salt and drain) eggplant before high-heat preparation to remove bitterness.
- Marinated eggplant side dish:
 - Brush slices with olive oil and grill until golden brown.
 - Soak in a mixture of red wine vinegar, chopped mint, minced garlic, flat-leaf parsley, and extra virgin olive oil.

HOT and SWEET peppers

- Hot Peppers:

- Love sweat-inducing heat.
- Summer varieties: Thai chili, banana peppers, serrano, habanero.
- Uses:
 - Thai chili: adds flavor to green papaya salads and eggplant stir-fry.
 - Poblano peppers: can be stuffed with seasoned rice and Mexican cheese for chile relleno, topped with green or red enchilada sauce.
 - Guacamole upgrade: add slivers of raw jalapeño and fresh lime to ripe avocado.

- Sweet Peppers and Bell Peppers:

- Versatile and mild-flavored, suitable for a variety of dishes.
- Common varieties: red, yellow, orange, and green bell peppers.
 - Uses:
 - Stuffed bell peppers: fill with quinoa, ground meat, or vegetables, and bake.
 - Stir-fries: add colorful bell peppers for sweetness and crunch.
 - Salads: chop raw for a fresh, crisp addition.
 - Grilling: brush with olive oil and grill until charred for a smoky flavor.
 - Roasting: roast and blend into soups or sauces for depth of flavor.
 - Sautéing: sauté with onions and garlic for a simple side dish.

Tomatoes

- Juicy, plump, and essential for summer meals.
- Versatile uses in American and international cuisines:
 - Fresh off-the-vine.
 - Slow-stewed.
 - Even churned into ice creams.

- Popular dishes:
- Caprese salad: sun-ripened tomatoes with fresh mozzarella and basil.
- Tomato tart: fresh tarragon and tangy goat cheese atop a flaky crust.
- Summer pasta: blistered cherry tomatoes with angel hair, Parmesan, and olive oil.
- Israeli couscous with cherry tomatoes, lemony parsley, and Kalamata olives, feta cheese

GREEN tomatoes

- Fried Green Tomatoes: Slice and coat in cornmeal or panko before frying until crispy.
- Green Tomato Salsa: Dice and mix with onions, cilantro, lime juice, and jalapeños for a zesty dip.
- Pickled Green Tomatoes: Pickle in a brine of vinegar, water, garlic, and dill for a tangy snack.
- Green Tomato Chutney: Cook with sugar, vinegar, onions, and spices for a sweet and savory condiment.
- Green Tomato Relish: Combine with bell peppers, onions, sugar, and vinegar for a flavorful relish.
- Baked Green Tomatoes: Top with breadcrumbs and Parmesan, then bake until golden.
- Green Tomato Gratin: Layer with cheese, herbs, and breadcrumbs, and bake until bubbly.
- Green Tomato Salad: Slice thinly and toss with olive oil, salt, pepper, and fresh herbs.
- Green Tomato Gazpacho: Blend with cucumbers, peppers, garlic, and olive oil for a refreshing soup.
- Green Tomato Pie: Make a sweet pie with sugar and spices, similar to an apple pie.

Fresh Basil

- Versatile Uses:
- Pesto: Blend with pine nuts, Parmesan, garlic, and olive oil for a classic sauce.
- Stir-fries: Add to Southeast Asian dishes like Thai or Vietnamese stir-fries and soups for fragrance and sweetness.
- Lemonade: Infuse in lemonade for a refreshing twist.

- Tomato Sauce: Stir into a slow-simmered tomato sauce for extra aromatic flavor in summer pasta dishes.

- Types:

- Thai basil

- Italian basil

- Growing Tips:

- Harvest leaves all summer.

- After harvesting, two new stems will grow from the plucked spot.