

FROM KING FEATURES SYNDICATE, 300 W.
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DONNA ERICKSON'S BEST BITES

FOR RELEASE OCT. 5, 2026

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PHOTO CREDIT: Donna Erickson



Make an Easy Zucchini Soup the Hit of the Season

“Go pick anything that’s bigger than your arm!” says Becca Newhouse, as 4-year-old son Ellis grabs a bucket and scampers off to the zucchini patch in their family garden. “If he sees a veggie that’s too ripe, he chucks it over the fence to the chickens,” she adds with a smile.

Becca knows firsthand that when kids dig in and help in the garden, the experience informs their eating habits. “Ellis actually asked for beets for lunch recently, a food he wouldn’t touch if he saw them in the grocery store. He eats handfuls of flavorful lettuce, although he still hesitates on the chard,” she admits.

When zucchini are in abundance, the nutritious squash will go from their plot to their plates in tempting presentations, whether they’re grilled, baked, boiled, sauteed, or hiding in a home-baked bread.

Even if you haven’t “grown your own,” you can provide a hands-on learning experience with your kids by taking a weekend jaunt to designated pick-your-own farms and orchards. Or bike together to an urban farmer’s market and check out the colorful displays. When you do, bring home plenty of zucchini and try this mild zucchini soup. Since you don’t have to peel this vegetable, the recipe goes together in minutes.

EASY ZUCCHINI SOUP

Makes 6-8 servings

- 4 tablespoons butter
- 1 large onion, roughly chopped
- 4 cups chicken stock
- 5-6 medium-size zucchini (about 2 1/4 pounds)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons nutmeg
- Salt to taste
- 1/2 cup half-and-half

Let your school-age child wash the zucchini and cut it into 1-inch chunks with a butter knife on a cutting board. Be sure that the ends are trimmed off.

Meanwhile, melt the butter in a large soup pot. Add onion and cook until the onions are soft but not brown, about 5 minutes.

Add stock and zucchini. The broth should just cover the chunks. Add nutmeg and salt. Bring to a boil, stirring frequently. Lower heat and simmer until zucchini is very soft, about 12-15 minutes.



Use an immersion hand blender to blend the ingredients. Or let soup cool (important!) and process in batches in a blender or food processor until smooth. Return the soup to the pot.

Stir in half-and-half, season with more salt if you wish, and heat through. Serve in a mug or soup bowl with a sandwich and fresh fruit on the side.

Cook’s Note: The soup freezes well.

Donna Erickson creates relationships and community through food and fun. Find more to nourish and delight you at DonnaErickson.com.

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