



Zany Zucchini Apricot Oatmeal Sandwich Cookies with Cool Cream Cheese Filling

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 15 / **Cook Time** 12 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

bake: to cook food with dry heat, as in an oven.

chop: to cut something into small, rough pieces using a blade.

grate: to reduce food, like a carrot, to very small shreds or pieces of the same size by rubbing it on a tool with an outside surface that has holes with cutting edges (a grater).

whisk: to beat or stir ingredients vigorously with a fork or whisk to mix, blend, or incorporate air.

spread: to apply a food, like butter, soft cheese, nut butter, jam, or frosting to another food, such as a cracker, bread, or cake using a butter knife or spatula.

Equipment

- ☐ Oven
- ☐ Cookie or baking sheet
- ☐ Mixing bowls
- ☐ Grater
- ☐ Clean dish towel or paper towels
- ☐ Cutting board
- ☐ Kid-safe knife
- ☐ Dry measuring cups
- ☐ Measuring spoons
- ☐ Whisk

- ☐ Metal fork
- ☐ Wooden spoon

Ingredients

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☐ Cookie:

- ☐ 1/2 zucchini, grated with moisture squeezed out
- ☐ 1/4 C dried apricots, chopped
- ☐ 3/4 C all-purpose flour ****(for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub 3/4 C gluten-free/nut-free all-purpose flour)****
- ☐ 1/2 C quick-cooking oats ****(for CELIAC sub 1/2 C certified gluten-free quick-cooking oats)****
- ☐ 1/4 tsp baking soda
- ☐ 1/8 tsp salt
- ☐ 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- ☐ 1/4 tsp nutmeg
- ☐ 1/4 C or 1/2 stick butter, softened ****(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub 1/4 C dairy-free/nut-free butter)****
- ☐ 1/3 C brown sugar
- ☐ 1 egg ****(for EGG ALLERGY sub 1/4 C applesauce or mashed banana)****
- ☐ 1/2 tsp pure vanilla extract ****(for GLUTEN ALLERGY use certified gluten-free pure vanilla extract, not imitation vanilla flavor—check label)****

☐ Filling:

- ☐ 1/4 C or 2 oz cream cheese, softened ****(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub 1/4 C or 2 oz dairy-free/nut-free cream cheese)****
- ☐ 1 T honey
- ☐ 1/4 tsp pure vanilla extract ****(for GLUTEN ALLERGY use certified gluten-free pure vanilla extract, not imitation vanilla flavor—check label)****

Food Allergen Substitutions

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Celiac/Gluten/Wheat: For 3/4 C all-purpose flour, substitute 3/4 C gluten-free/nut-free all-purpose flour. For 1/2 C quick-cooking oats, substitute 1/2 C certified gluten-free quick-cooking oats. Use certified gluten-

free pure vanilla extract, not imitation vanilla flavor.

Dairy: For 1/4 C or 1/2 stick butter, substitute 1/4 C dairy-free/nut-free butter. For 1/4 C or 2 oz cream cheese, substitute 1/4 C or 2 oz dairy-free/nut-free cream cheese.

Egg: For 1 egg, substitute 1/4 C applesauce or mashed banana.

Instructions

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preheat + grate + chop

Preheat your oven to 375 F while we start with the cookie dough. Have your kids grate **1/2 zucchini** and use a clean dish towel or paper towels to squeeze out the excess liquid. Set zucchini aside and discard the liquid. Dip a kid-safe knife in water, chop **1/4 cup of apricots**, and set aside.

combine + whisk

In a small mixing bowl, combine **3/4 cup flour**, **1/2 cup oats**, **1/4 teaspoon baking soda**, **1/8 teaspoon salt**, **1/4 teaspoon cinnamon**, and **1/4 teaspoon nutmeg**. Whisk together your dry ingredients.

crack + measure + mix

Crack **1 egg** into a large mixing bowl. Then, measure and add **1/4 cup softened butter**, **1/3 cup brown sugar**, and **1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract**. Mix until all the ingredients come together.

combine + press + bake

Pour the dry ingredients bit-by-bit into the wet ingredients, stirring after each addition until all traces of flour disappear. Add the **grated zucchini** and **chopped apricots**. Mix well. Scoop rounded half tablespoons of cookie dough onto a cookie sheet and flatten them with the palm of your clean hands. Bake for 12 minutes or until the edges of the cookies are golden brown. While they bake, prepare the filling. Carefully remove the cookie sheet from the oven and let the cookies cool before adding the filling.

soften + mix

To make the Cool Cream Cheese Filling, add **1/4 cup softened cream cheese**, **1 tablespoon honey**, and **1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract** to a small bowl. Mix well until all the ingredients are combined and smooth.

spread + top + press

Spread a small dollop of filling onto half of the cookies. Top with another cookie and press down gently to make your cookie sandwiches. Enjoy!

Featured Ingredient: Zucchini!

Hi! I'm Zucchini!

"I'm very fond of summer, aren't you? After all, I'm a summer squash! I have beautiful, tender green skin, so don't peel it off before cooking, or you'll lose some of my fiber and nutrients. I may be a small gourd, but you wouldn't like my taste as much if I got too big. You can do all sorts of things with me to fit your recipes: slicing, dicing, grating, and even making spaghetti-like noodles out of me using a vegetable peeler or a fancy device called a spiralizer!"

History

Zucchini (*Cucurbita pepo*) is a summer squash of the same family that includes cucumbers and melons.

Summer squash is a squash that is picked when immature, while its peel is still tender.

Like many other veggies we've seen, zucchini is technically a fruit, not a vegetable!

Central and South American people have been eating zucchini for several thousand years. However, the zucchini we know today is an Italian variety of summer squash developed from those of native Central and South America.

Christopher Columbus brought squash seeds to the Mediterranean region and Africa.

The Native American word for zucchini is "skutasquash," which means "green thing eaten raw."

Anatomy & Etymology

Zucchini grow on vines just like cucumbers do.

Zucchini plants produce male and female flowers on the same plant, with the female flowers directly attached to the fruit and the male flowers attached to a long stem on the plant. Therefore, insects must pollinate the plants for the fruit to grow.

Zucchini can rapidly grow to several feet long, but the smaller ones taste sweeter.

The record for the longest zucchini is 8 feet 3.3 inches. The heaviest zucchini was 64 pounds 8 ounces!

It's "zucchini" in the US, Canada, and a few other countries. The word is a plural of the Italian "zucchini" (masculine form—the feminine form, "zucchina" is preferred), which is a diminutive (smaller version) of "zucca" or "gourd."

In France, they say "courgette" (koo-RETT), which the British also use. It's a diminutive of the French "courge," which also means "gourd."

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

Harvesting zucchini when they're between 6 to 8 inches long and 3 to 4 inches in diameter ensures they will be more tender and sweet.

A "bumper crop" of zucchini is an overload of zucchini that grows faster than a home gardener can cook

and eat it!

When buying zucchini, choose firm and heavy ones for their size. In addition, fresh zucchini should have bright, glossy skin free of bruises or nicks. Zucchini stay fresh for up to a week when stored in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.

Zucchini is very versatile, and you can use them in both savory and sweet dishes, like ratatouille and zucchini bread.

Fresh zucchini blossoms can be cooked and eaten raw. You can remove the pistils from the female flower blossoms and the stamens from male flower blossoms, but you don't have to. Both have flavor and are edible.

Nutrition

Potassium: helps reduce blood pressure and increase blood flow to and from our hearts.

Manganese: helps wounds heal and bones grow.

Antioxidants: help keep us healthy and healing faster when we're sick.

Fiber: helps us digest our food and absorb nutrients from our food.