

Healthy Living Life

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Grilled corn with ancho-avocado butter
— BETTER HOMES AND GARDENS, WWW.BHG.COM



COMFORT FOOD
MARISA RENWALD
marisarenwald@yahoo.com

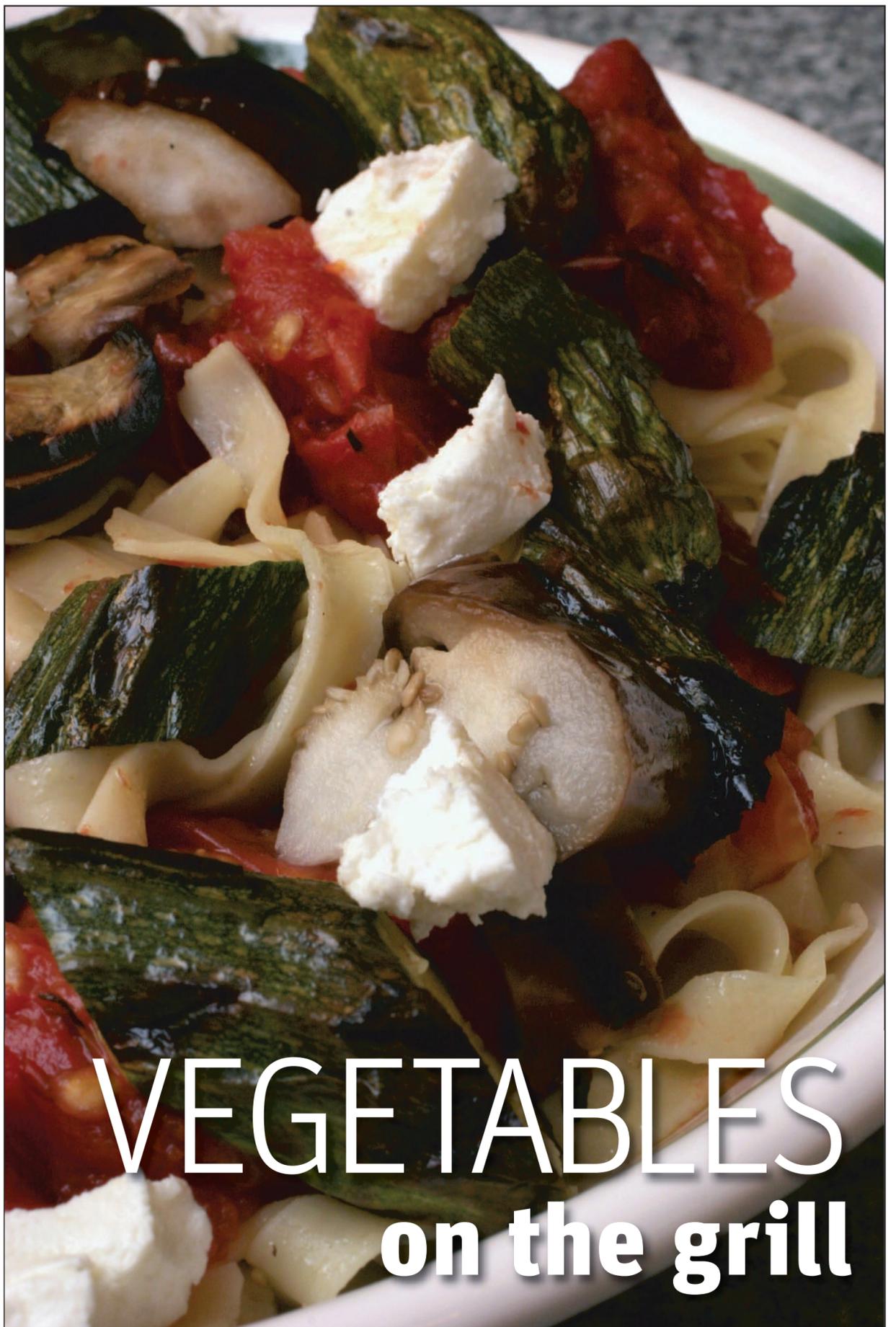
Certain methods of preparation make certain foods taste better. Peanuts taste better when made into butter. French fries taste better with ketchup. A cheese sandwich tastes better grilled in a sauté pan. Others, of course, go without saying. And when it comes to the largest group of food — vegetables — it's hard to argue that a raw veggie doesn't taste better grilled.

Raw foodists may thumb their nose at the idea of spoiling a perfectly good-tasting, nutritious vegetable by bringing fire into the equation. However, grilling summer's bountiful crops does quite the opposite. Suddenly, a bitterly raw vegetable opens up with a new flavor — pure, bold, savory. By blanching your favorite veggies with just a hint of heat, the true flavor of the vegetables is magnified tenfold — something baking, roasting, pureeing or frying could never really do. Even devout veggie haters will admit that a grilled vegetable is much easier to stomach.

The merit of preparing grilled vegetables is that you don't have to be an expert griller. It doesn't take much more than basting your sliced vegetables with a little oil and tossing them on the grill for a few minutes at a time to create a delicious side dish. But a little ingenuity in the kitchen will take those plain grilled vegetables far.

If you are a novice vegetable griller, start with an ingredient that you can be sure to taste the difference between grilling it and using another method of preparation. Sweet corn is an excellent candidate and it may be the easiest veggie on the grill because it needs no special handling, no extra ingredients. Sure, there are plenty of fancy recipes to soak the ears prior to grilling, to add a flavored butter between the kernels and the husk, but for pure sweet corn flavor, plopping fresh ears on the grill and turning to ensure even grill marks is the easiest way to do it. The result of a grilled ear of corn is so different than one that has been steamed or boiled. The kernels have a crunch and juiciness to them — almost al dente if you could put a technical term on a vegetable's bite — with a little bit of smokiness from the grill. Then, if you wish, dazzle that grilled ear of corn up with anything that suits your menu. Chili-lime butter is a refreshing summer adornment and crema, grated Parmesan and chili powder is a popular Southwestern delight.

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VEGETABLES on the grill

AP PHOTO/LARRY CROWE

Like sweet corn, the crunchier vegetables tend to be fairly simple to grill. Bell peppers, onions and carrots won't get soft on you. However, eggplant, zucchini and tomatoes run the risk of getting soggy.

Besides adding your own creativity, there isn't a lot of rigor in grilling up vegetables, but if you feel a little like you could use some guidance, here are a few tips that grilledvegetablerecipe.com offers.

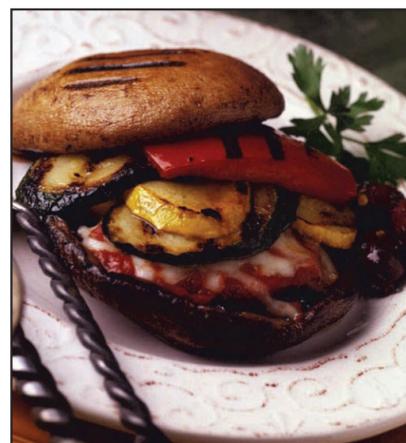
■ To prevent sticking and to enhance flavor, coat vegetable pieces in olive oil or vegetable oil before grilling.

■ Herbs burn easily on the grill. Salt and pepper can withstand the heat, but be sure to toss your veggies in herbs after grilling.

■ When making kebabs, choose vegetables with the same grilling time to put on a kebab. Keep in mind that softer vegetables like tomatoes will have a much quicker grilling time than crunchier veggies.

■ For a sweet caramelized flavor, sprinkle sugar on the vegetables about half-way through grilling time.

■ Soaking your vegetables in cold water prior to grilling prevents them from drying out.



Fettuccine With Grilled Vegetables and Goat Cheese

This dish can be simply made with a medley of whatever fresh vegetables are available. Once vegetables are grilled, crumble or cut the tender chunks and toss with fettuccine. Finish the dish with olive oil, fresh crushed garlic, salt, freshly ground black pepper and chunks of goat cheese.

Grilled Portobello and Vegetable Stacks

Vegetables take about half an hour to cook, using grill. They make a satisfying meatless meal.

— AP PHOTO/MUSHROOM COUNCIL

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RIDING OFF POST-TRAUMA

Joey gets pets for his part in the equine-assisted psychotherapy counseling program. **E2**



A recipe for summer squash, potato and tomato gratin

BY LYNNE CHAR BENNETT
San Francisco Chronicle

In many folks' minds (mine included), summer squash means green zucchini. You've probably heard about someone with an overabundant garden who sneakily leaves a surfeit of squash on neighbors' porches and who totes zucchini to work to share with colleagues.

Nowadays, green zucchini is just one of many varieties you can find. Mainstream stores often carry golden zucchini, scalloped patty-pans, yellow crookneck and yellow straightneck. Produce-centric stores and farmers markets may also offer striped Cocozelle and Costata Romanesco, the long, two-toned Zephyr and some round, scalloped varieties aptly named Starship (dark green) and Flying

Saucer (bright golden-yellow with a dark green-striped top).

Flavors and textures of summer squashes, especially the heirlooms, can be different, too, though not as strikingly different as in appearance. I look forward to a future side-by-side tasting to learn more about them.

Meanwhile, I've made Summer Squash, Potato and Tomato Gratin, with sausages and onions sandwiched between layers of potato and squash. The gratin uses just 1 cup of cheese and forgoes the custardy combo of heavy whipping cream and eggs, so it will be lighter in texture than most versions.

Vegetarians can substitute marinated tofu, legumes or more vegetables for the sausage layer.



Cocozelle



Flying Saucer



Zephyr

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