



Cheesy Meatball Zucchini Boats with Pastry

A Garden Full of Boats

My garden always grows too much zucchini. I end up with giant ones on my counter. So I had to get creative with them.

One day, I thought, why not make them into little boats? I filled them with my grandson's favorite meatballs and cheese. Now it's his most-asked-for dinner. I still laugh at that.

Let's Get Our Hands Dirty

First, wash your zucchini. Then you cut them in half the long way. Scoop out the middle with a big spoon. It feels like carving a little canoe.

Now for the fun part. Load up your boats with sauce, meatballs, and lots of cheese. Don't be shy with the cheese. This matters because cooking should be fun, not fussy.

The Magic Pastry Blanket

After the boats bake, you tuck them in. You use a soft sheet of puff pastry like a warm blanket. Brush it with a little egg to make it shiny and golden.

Fun fact: Puff pastry puffs up because it has hundreds of tiny layers of butter. When it bakes, the butter steams and pushes the layers apart. Isn't that neat?

What's your favorite cozy food that feels like a warm hug? Tell me about it.

Why This Feels So Good

This meal is more than just food. It's about making something special from simple things. That big zucchini becomes a treasure.

This matters because it teaches us to be resourceful. It feels good to not let anything go to waste. And it brings everyone to the table, happy and hungry.

Your Turn in the Kitchen

The best part is sharing this with you. The smell from your oven will be amazing. It tells everyone that a good meal is coming.

Do you have a favorite family recipe that uses up garden veggies? I would love to hear your stories.

And when you make these, will you have them for a weeknight dinner or a special weekend treat?

Ingredients:

Ingredient	Amount	Notes
Zucchini	2 large (10-12 inches each)	
Marinara sauce	1 jar (24 ounces)	
Homestyle meatballs	32	frozen
Mozzarella cheese	1 cup	shredded
Puff pastry sheets	1 package (2 10-inch)	thawed and cut in half
Egg	1 large	beaten
Salt and pepper	to taste	
Butter	2 tablespoons	melted



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My Cheesy Meatball Zucchini Boats

Hello, my dear! Come sit with me for a moment. I want to share a recipe from my kitchen. It feels like a warm hug on a cool evening. We are making cheesy meatball zucchini boats with a flaky pastry top. Doesn't that sound wonderful? It is a fun way to eat your vegetables. My grandson used to turn his nose up at zucchini. Now he asks for these boats. I still laugh at that.

See also [Cabbage Roll Casserole](#)

Let's get our hands busy. First, we need to prepare our zucchini. Step 1: Warm your oven to 375°F. Wash two large zucchinis under cool water. Slice the little ends off of each one. Now, cut them in half the long way. You will have four boat shapes. Scoop out the soft middle part with a big spoon. (A hard-learned tip: don't scoop too deep! You want a sturdy boat that holds your filling.) Place them on a baking sheet lined with foil.

Now for the fun part, the filling! Step 2: It is time to load up our boats. Pour your marinara sauce into each zucchini half. Then, carefully place the frozen meatballs inside. I like to tuck them in like little meaty passengers. Finally, cover everything with a blanket of mozzarella cheese. That cheese makes everything better, doesn't it? Do you have a favorite cheese for melting? Share below!

Step 3: Bake your boats for 45 minutes. Your kitchen will start to smell amazing. The zucchini will get soft and the cheese will bubble. Step 4: Take them out of the oven. Now, cover each boat with half a sheet of puff pastry. It is like putting a warm, flaky hat on them. Brush the pastry with a beaten egg. This makes it turn a beautiful golden brown. Add a

little salt and pepper on top.

Step 5: Bake them for another 20 minutes. Watch for that perfect golden color. Step 6: Take them out and brush the tops with melted butter. This gives them a lovely shine. Let them cool for just a minute before you cut each boat into three pieces. Then, it is time to serve. I love seeing everyone's faces when they see this dish. It always brings a smile.

- **Cook Time:** About 1 hour 5 minutes
- **Total Time:** About 1 hour 20 minutes
- **Yield:** 12 servings
- **Category:** Dinner, Main Course

Let's Get Creative with Your Boats

The best part of cooking is making a recipe your own. You can try so many different things. I like to change the filling sometimes. It keeps dinner exciting. Here are a few ideas I have tried in my own kitchen. They are all quite tasty in their own way.

- **Veggie Lover's Dream:** Skip the meatballs. Use seasoned black beans and corn instead. Top it all with pepper jack cheese for a little kick.
- **Spicy Italian Twist:** Use spicy Italian sausage meatballs. Add a sprinkle of red pepper flakes with the cheese. It will warm you right up.
- **Autumn Harvest:** For fall, try sweet potato and sage. Use little roasted sweet potato cubes instead of meatballs. It feels so cozy.

See also Mini Chocolate Chip Pancakes

Which one would you try first? Comment below!

Serving Your Masterpiece

Now, what to serve with your beautiful zucchini boats? I think a simple green salad is perfect. The crisp lettuce is a nice change from the warm, cheesy boat. Buttered egg noodles are another favorite in my house. They soak up the extra marinara sauce so well. For a pretty plate, sprinkle some fresh chopped parsley on top. The little green bits make everything pop.

What should we drink with this meal? A cold glass of milk is always a good choice. It goes so well with the cheese and pastry. For the grown-ups, a nice glass of red wine is lovely. It pairs nicely with the tomato sauce. Which would you choose tonight?



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Keeping Your Zucchini Boats Shipshape

Let's talk about storing these tasty boats. They keep well in the fridge for three days. Just pop them in a sealed container.

You can freeze them for a later meal too. Wrap each piece tightly in foil. Then place them all in a freezer bag.

I once reheated one straight from the freezer. The pastry got a bit soft. Now I thaw them in the fridge first.

Reheat in the oven for the crispiest results. The microwave works for a quick lunch. But the oven keeps the pastry flaky.

Batch cooking saves you time on a busy week. It means a good meal is always close by. This matters for a happy, calm home.

Have you ever tried storing it this way? Share below!

Smooth Sailing in the Kitchen

Sometimes the zucchini rolls around. This makes it hard to hollow out. Just slice a thin piece off the bottom.

That creates a flat, stable base. Your zucchini boat will not tip over. This makes the job much safer and easier.

Is your pastry not turning golden? The egg wash is the secret. I remember my first pie with a pale crust.

A good egg wash makes it shiny and brown. Do not skip this simple

step. It makes your food look beautiful.

Are the meatballs still frozen in the middle? Let them thaw a little first. Or bake the boats for a few more minutes.

Fixing small problems builds your cooking confidence. It also makes the flavors just right. *Fun fact: A stable zucchini is a happy zucchini!*

Which of these problems have you run into before?

Your Zucchini Boat Questions

Q: Can I make this gluten-free?

A: Yes! Use gluten-free puff pastry. You can find it in the frozen aisle.

See also One Pot Cowboy Spaghetti Recipe

Q: Can I prepare this ahead of time?

A: You can hollow the zucchini a day early. Keep them wrapped in the fridge.

Q: What can I use instead of meatballs?

A: Cooked ground beef works wonderfully. Lentils are a great vegetarian choice too.

Q: Can I make a smaller portion?

A: Of course. Just use one zucchini and half the ingredients. It is easy to scale down.

Q: Any other fun additions?

A: A sprinkle of Italian herbs is nice. My grandson loves extra cheese on top.

Which tip will you try first?

Until Next Time, Happy Cooking!

I hope you love making these cheesy boats. They always make my kitchen smell wonderful. It is a recipe that feels like a hug.

I would love to see your creations. Your family might add their own special twist. Sharing food stories brings us all closer.

Have you tried this recipe? Tag us on Pinterest! Use the handle @ElowensKitchen. I look at every single photo.

Happy cooking!
—Elowen Thorn.

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Cooking Method:[Baking](#)



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Difficulty: **Beginner**

Prep time: **20 minutes**



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Cook time: **1 hour 5 minutes**

Rest time:

Total time: **1 hour 25 minutes**

Servings: **12 servings**



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Calories: **491 kcal**

Best Season: Summer

Description

A hearty and comforting dish featuring zucchini boats filled with

marinara, meatballs, and cheese, all topped with a golden puff pastry crust.

Ingredients

- 2 large (10-12 inches each) zucchini
- 1 jar (24 ounces) marinara sauce
- 32 homestyle meatballs, frozen
- 1 cup mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 1 package (2 10-inch) puff pastry sheets, thawed and cut in half
- 1 large egg, beaten
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
2. Wash each zucchini under cold or lukewarm water and slice the ends off of each.
3. Cut the zucchini in half, lengthwise, and use a large spoon to hollow out the centers of each zucchini half and set on a large, foil-lined baking sheet. (You could also use a large casserole dish if you have one big enough.)
4. Equally, divide and add the marinara sauce, meatballs, and cheese to each of the four hollowed-out zucchini.
5. Bake for 45 minutes.
6. Remove from the oven and cover each zucchini with half a sheet of puff pastry.
7. Brush the egg on the top of each pastry, adding salt and pepper, to taste.
8. Return the zucchini to the oven and bake for another 20 minutes, or

until golden brown.

9. Remove the zucchini from the oven and brush the tops with the melted butter.
10. Cut each zucchini boat into about 3 pieces and serve.

Notes

For the best results, ensure the puff pastry is fully thawed before using. You can customize the filling with different cheeses or types of meatballs.

Keywords: Pastry Topped Zucchini Boats