

FRIED ZUCCHINI

Olive oil or Vegetable oil
1 1/2 cups grated Parmesan cheese
1 1/2 cups plain breadcrumbs or panko
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 eggs
3 medium zucchini (cut into 3-inch long x 1/2-inch wide strips)

Mix together the Parmesan cheese, breadcrumbs, and salt in a medium bowl. In a separate bowl, beat the eggs. Working in small batches, dip the zucchini into the egg to coat, then coat with the breadcrumbs, patting if necessary to cover the zucchini completely. Place coated zucchini on a platter or cookie sheet and set aside.

Pour two inches of oil into a large frying pan, and heat over medium heat until it reaches 350 degrees (Note: If you don't have a deep-fry thermometer, don't panic! When the oil starts to glisten on top and bubble slightly, you're good to go.) Working in batches, fry the zucchini for around 3 minutes, or until they golden brown, then carefully remove from oil with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels. Serve with marinara or aioli sauce. Or, just eat them plain! Makes approximately 4 servings.

SUMMER RATATOUILLE

This is one of those recipes that you can totally make your own. Feel free to add more or less of any of the vegetables in this recipe, or throw in whatever other veggies you might have on hand like red or green peppers, patty pan squash, onions, green beans, or even leftover corn, cut from the cob.

3 tablespoons olive oil
1 onion, chopped (red or white)
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 large eggplant, diced
2 cans (14.5 ounces each) diced tomatoes
2 zucchini or summer squash (or a combo) cut into chunks
1 red bell pepper, sliced
1/2 tablespoon fresh thyme, chopped
Salt + Pepper

In a large stock pot or Dutch oven, heat the olive oil over medium heat, then sauté the onion and garlic until tender. Add the eggplant, tomatoes and thyme, lower heat, cover, and simmer for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the zucchini and cook for an additional 15-20 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Makes approximately 4 servings.

ITALIAN-STYLE ZUCCHINI FRITTERS

2 cups grated zucchini
2 eggs, beaten
1/4 cup chopped onion
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
dash of salt + pepper
2 tablespoons olive oil or vegetable oil

Combine all the ingredients, except the oil, in a large mixing bowl. Heat oil in a large saute pan over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, drop zucchini mixture by heaping tablespoonfuls, and cook for a few minutes on each side until golden brown. Drain fritters on paper towels, then serve with marinara sauce, or enjoy them plain (equally good!). Makes about 12 fritters.

STUFFED PATTY PAN SQUASH

This is similar to a stuffed mushroom recipe, only using Patty Pan rather than mushrooms.

6 pattypan squash, stem and blossom removed
6 slices bacon
1/2 cup onion, diced
1 1/2 cups bread crumbs
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese + a handful more
salt + pepper

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a large saucepan, bring approximately one inch of water to a boil over medium-high heat, add the squash to the pan, cover and cook for around 10 minutes, or squash are just tender. Drain patty pans, and allow to cool slightly. When cool, slice off the top stem, then, using a melon baller, carefully scoop out the centers of each, reserving the meat. Chop the reserved squash meat and set aside.

Place the bacon in saute pan and cook over medium-high heat until browned. Remove the bacon from the pan and drain on paper towels. Saute the onion in the bacon drippings, then add the squash pieces, and cook for about a minute or so. Remove the pan from the heat and add the breadcrumbs and Parmesan cheese. Crumble in the bacon, and mix until all ingredients are combined. Add a bit of salt and pepper if you wish, then stuff the mixture into each patty pan, place them in a baking dish, top with a handful of Parmesan cheese, cover with aluminum foil, and bake for 10 minutes. Remove foil and cook for another 5-7 minutes, or the until cheese is bubbly.

CHOCOLATE CHIP ZUCCHINI BREAD

3 eggs
2 cups sugar
1 cup oil
1 tsp. vanilla extract
2 oz. unsweetened chocolate, melted
2 cups grated zucchini
2 cups flour
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. cinnamon
1 cup chopped walnuts or pecans (optional)
1/2 cup chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 250 degrees.

In a large mixing bowl, beat eggs until light and fluffy, then gradually mix in the sugar, oil and vanilla. Stir in the melted chocolate and zucchini, then the flour, salt, baking soda, and cinnamon. Finally, mix in the nuts and chocolate chips, making sure all ingredients are well-combined. Pour batter into two greased and floured 9x5 loaf pans. Bake for 1 hour, or until wooden toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Allow to cool before serving.

Makes two loaves.