



August 2001 - Celebrating an abundance of Zucchini.

The word Zucchini is an Italian name for what many English speaking countries and France call Courgettes. A zucchini is most desirable when it is small and young, and can be an attractive part of a meal with the flower still attached. As it matures it becomes more sponge like in texture and is more commonly known as a vegetable marrow.

Zucchini and Tomato Gratin

1T Olive Oil

1 1/2lb Zucchini-thinly sliced

-sauté the zucchini in a large saucepan til just tender, may have to be done in 2 batches. Then remove.

2T Olive oil

1 Onion-thinly sliced in 1/2 moons.

1 Garlic clove-finely chopped.

-Add remaining oil and sauté the onion and garlic til soft.

4 Fresh tomatoes-peeled and roughly chopped.

-add to onions and reduce heat, cook till the excess water has evaporated, about 15mins.

Salt and Pepper

Stir the zucchini into the sauce and pour into a shallow baking dish that has been lightly greased.

Level the top.

1/2c Bread crumbs

2T Parmesan Cheese.

-mix together and sprinkle on the top of the dish

2T Butter-dot the top of the dish and bake, uncovered 25-30 mins @400°F til crisp on top.

Zucchini Lasagne

Use your favourite lasagne recipe and substitute this prepared zucchini for the noodles. Or make a version of Zucchini Parmesan by layering the prepared zucchini with your favourite tomato or spaghetti sauce and grated mozzarella mixed with parmesan.

4 medium Zucchini- sliced 3/4 inch thick.

-set the following up in separate bowls for dipping.

1c Flour

2 eggs-beaten

1c fine breadcrumbs, seasoned with Parmesan, salt and pepper and basil.

-dip the zucchini one slice at a time in the flour, then the egg, then lastly in the breadcrumb mixture.

-fry in some olive oil until both sides are brown and the centre is tender. Another option is to bake the zucchini for 20-25mins @ 350°F.

Barbequed Zucchini

This is a simple summer vegetable dish that is delicious and allows one to enjoy the summer bounty harvest. I like to use the yellow summer zucchini as it provides excellent colour to the dish. There are no quantities to this dish so you can use what you have at hand.

On the market there are these great contraptions that you can put on your BBQ to reduce the size of the holes on the grill. I highly recommend acquiring one as they allow you to have the freedom to BBQ fish, prawns and vegetables with out the food falling through the grill.

Yellow or green zucchini-cut into 4" wedges

Red, green or yellow peppers-3/4 inch slices- length wise.

Red onion-3/4 inch half moons

Other vegetables that go well with this dish are eggplant, fennel bulb, asparagus or beans.

Then take you favourite vinaigrette and toss the vegetables in it and allow to stand for 1hour.

Then drain, place on a hot BBQ and turn frequently until done. This takes only about 5mins.

Zucchini Sandwiches

To prepare the Zucchini slice in 1/2 –3/4 inch slices spray with a little oil and season with salt and pepper. Then bake in the oven or grill on the BBQ. This makes a great sandwich filling. Try it with some humus, tomato and sprouts on your favourite home-style bread. Red peppers can also be done in this way and make an excellent sandwich filling.

Ratatouille

The trick to making good ratatouille is not to over cook the vegetables, but to keep them crisp. Also if you have the opportunity to use fresh herbs, do so. You will have to increase the amount just a bit., by half or double.

1/4 c Olive oil

-Heat in a large heavy pot.

1 Onion-chopped

4 Cloves Garlic-minced

1 Bay leaf

-Sauté til soft.

2 bell peppers-cut into strips

2 small Zucchini-cut into large chunks (try the yellow kind)

-Sauté til just tender

3T red wine

1/2 c Tomato juice

1t Basil and marjoram

1/2 t Oregano

1/2 t Rosemary-chopped

Salt and pepper to taste

-add and bring quickly to a simmer.

1/2 c Parsley-chopped fine

-add to the dish just before serving.

There are numerous baking ideas, like putting zucchini in your favourite muffin, or substitute some grated zucchini for some carrot in your favourite carrot cake.

Below I have a very yummy chocolate zucchini cake....ummm!

Chocolate Zucchini cake with an orange glaze.

2 1/4c Flour

1 1/2t Baking Soda

3/4 t Cinnamon

1/3c Cocoa powder

-mix and place to one side

1/2 c Oil

3/4c Yoghurt

1 1/2c Sugar

1/2t Vanilla

3 eggs

2c Zucchini-grated

2t Orange zest

1/2c Walnuts-chopped

-combine all the wet ingredients and fold in the dry. Til it is well mixed. Pour into a greased loaf pan and bake for about 1 hour @ 350*

-when baked take a long skewer and punch numerous holes all over the cake, then take the glaze and brush on the surface, wait for it to soak in a brush some more on, until it will not absorb any more. This must be done when the cake is hot.

Glaze

1/3c Orange juice

1/3c Brown sugar

-slowly heat in a pan until the sugar is dissolved.

-can bush on cake warm or cold.

Alexandra Berlingette owns and operates

24 Carrot Catering in Nanaimo

754-0075

carrot@direct.ca