

## **PROVENCAL-STYLE STUFFED ZUCCHINI**

*(Farm to Fork)*

2 cups (about 2 oz.) diced French baguette or other crusty bread, preferably day-old (1/2-inch dice)

1/2 cup finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

1/4 cup packed fresh parsley leaves

1 Tbsp. minced garlic

1/2 tsp. salt, plus more if needed

1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper, plus more if needed

3 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil

8 small zucchini (each about 7 inches long and 1 1/4 to 1 1/2 inches wide)

4 ounces fresh lean mild pork sausage

3/4 cup minced onions

1 cup finely chopped peeled and seeded tomatoes (about 2 medium tomatoes)

Pulse the diced bread in a food processor until you have an even mix of fine and coarse crumbs. Add 1/4 cup of Parmesan, the parsley leaves, 1 1/2 tsp. of the minced garlic, 1/4 tsp. of the salt, and 1/4 tsp. of the pepper, and process until evenly mixed. Reserve 2 Tbsp. of the breadcrumb mixture for the filling.

Mix 1 1/2 Tbsp. of the extra-virgin olive oil into the remaining breadcrumbs, transfer the mixture to a small container, and set it aside.

Lay the zucchini on a flat work surface, and using a sharp knife, slice off the top quarter of each squash lengthwise. Next, slice a sliver off the bottom of each squash to help keep it stable. Using a small melon baller or spoon, remove the inner flesh from the zucchini to form a small boat shape, leaving a shell that is approximately 1/4 inch thick. Cut the zucchini pulp into 1/4-inch dice, and reserve it separately. Lightly salt the inside of the zucchini shells with the remaining 1/4 tsp. salt. Set them, hollow side down, on paper towels to drain while you prepare the filling.

Heat 1 Tbsp. of the olive oil in a 12-inch skillet. Add the sausage and saute until it is golden, using a spoon to break it into small pieces, about 6 minutes. Add the onions and cook until they are soft, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the chopped zucchini and cook for 2 minutes. Add the tomatoes and the remaining 1 1/2 tsp. garlic, and cook, stirring until the moisture has evaporated and the filling comes together, 2 minutes. Remove the skillet from the heat, stir in the reserved 2 Tbsp. breadcrumb mixture, and season with additional salt and pepper if necessary.

Preheat the oven to 350F.

Rub the outside of the zucchini with the remaining 1/2 Tbsp. olive oil, and season them lightly with salt and pepper. Turn the zucchini hollow side up, and lightly pat the insides with paper towels. Using a tablespoon or other small spoon, fill the zucchini with the warm filling. Top with reserved breadcrumbs. Lay the zucchini in a baking dish, and bake for 30 minutes, or until golden brown and crispy on top.

6 to 8 servings.