

Recipe

From CALABRIA

SPAGHETTI ALLE ZUCCHINE - Spaghetti with Sautéed Zucchini

Makes 6 servings

3 large cloves garlic, peeled

15 large sprigs fresh Italian parsley, leaves only

2 pounds thin zucchini, but not the Japanese type

Coarse-grained salt

½ cup extra virgin olive oil

About 1 cup completely defatted chicken broth, preferably homemade

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

15 ounces Ricotta, very well drained

5 tablespoons sweet butter (2½ ounces) at room temperature, or olive oil

½ cup lukewarm water, or more as needed

FOR THE PASTA:

Coarse-grained salt

1 pound dried pasta such as spaghetti, preferably imported Italian

TO SERVE:

Abundant fresh basil leaves

Freshly ground black pepper

Freshly grated Pecorino Romano cheese

Coarsely chop the garlic and parsley together on a cutting board. Trim the ends of the zucchini, quarter them lengthwise, then cut each quarter into 1½-inch pieces. Soak the zucchini in a bowl of cold water with a little coarse salt for half an hour. Set a large stockpot with cold water to boil over medium heat.

When ready, drain the zucchini and rinse under cold running water to remove excess salt and the bitter taste from the zucchini. Heat the olive oil in a medium-size skillet over medium heat; when the oil is warm, add the garlic mixture and sauté for 2 minutes. Add the zucchini and sauté until cooked but not mushy, about 20 minutes, adding a little of the broth as needed. Season with salt and abundant pepper.

Meanwhile, place the ricotta in a large serving bowl, season with salt and pepper, and add the butter or olive oil. Mix very well, add the lukewarm water, and mix again until very smooth and creamy, adding more water if necessary.

When the zucchini is ready and the water reaches a boil, add coarse salt to the stockpot, then the pasta, and cook until al dente, 9 to 12 minutes, depending on the brand. Drain the pasta, transfer it to the bowl containing the ricotta, and mix very well, then add the zucchini and abundant basil leaves, and mix again. Serve hot with black pepper and the Pecorino Romano sprinkled over.