



Smithsonian Associates

Exploring Calabria's Art and Cuisine

Daytime Program on Zoom

Thursday, June 10, 2021 - 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. ET

'a parmigiana di zucchini .. zucchini parmesan

For a small pan of 6 portions, about 7 x 9"

Nobody knows why they call this *parmigiana*, it's not from Parma nor does it rely heavily on the grated *parmigiano*. Variations of *parmigiana* are made in many parts of Italy, tastier the farther south you go until you get to Calabria where it reaches perfection in a savory, rich, harmonious amalgamation of flavors.

Ingredients:

- 1.5 kg / 3 lbs white zucchini (the pale green kind if you can find them)
- extra virgin olive oil
- finely ground semolina flour
- *provola* (relatively fresh, not aged, soft, mild, cow's milk cheese)
- *parmigiano reggiano*, grated
- *soppressata* / a rough grain *calabrese* salame with some hot pepper, thinly sliced
- 2 hard boiled eggs, thickly sliced
- tomato puree
- 2 cloves garlic
- handful of sweet basil
- salt

Slice the zucchini in rounds that are roughly 1/2" thick or less, toss them with salt and let them sit in a colander to release liquid for 20-30 minutes (do not rinse). Dry the zucchini thoroughly in a clean dish cloth, toss in semolina (or corn meal) and fry until golden.

Make a simple red sauce with the tomato puree, enough water to clean out the bottle plus 2 whole cloves of garlic, a handful of sweet basil leaves and salt to taste. Let it boil for about 10 minutes or until it reduces slightly, remove the garlic.

Spread a thin layer of tomato sauce in the bottom of a baking pan, cover with a thick layer of overlapping slices of fried zucchini and then add in layers: small spoonfuls of tomato sauce, a sprinkling of grated *parmigiano* cheese, a layer of thinly sliced *provola*, thick slices of hardboiled eggs, a few small bits of very thinly sliced salame (don't overdo the salame, it's best if it's just a suggestion of flavor), and few more spoonfuls of sauce. Top with another thick layer of overlapping slices of fried zucchini, a sprinkling of grated *parmigiano* and a tiny bit of sauce.

Bake at 180C/350F for 20-25 minutes until the cheese melts and the top browns a bit. Serve warm or room temperature.

RESTRAINT with both the sauce and the salame is key.