



Sautéed Baby Zucchini with Shaved Parmigiano

I must confess that I've only recently come to appreciate the charms of summer squash. In the past, I thought zucchini and its cousins were a lackluster group that only assumed the personality of their closest companions. But after growing several varieties in my garden (including the lovely yellow sunburst squash, a French variety of green zucchini, and the pale green *ronde de nice*), I've had an abundance of summer squash to cook and experiment with and have started to understand just why they're so popular.

In summer, many food stores offer various shapes and sizes of summer squash from which to choose. Whether buying from a store or harvesting from your garden, choose zucchini when it's about 4 or 5 inches long and the round varieties when they're about the size of a golf ball.

Serve this delicious summer starter on a large platter to accompany a chilled bottle of dry rosé or try Long Vineyards Pinot Grigio. Alternatively, serve on individual plates as a first course with either of the same wines. You can use any variety of summer squash or, even better, a mixture of your favorite types.

2 lb	mixed baby summer squash (e.g., zucchini, pattypan, sunburst, <i>ronde de nice</i>)
1 to 2 tbsp	good-quality olive oil
2	cloves garlic, finely chopped
1/3 cup	finely chopped Italian parsley
	Salt and freshly ground pepper
1/4 lb (approx.)	Parmigiano Reggiano, shaved with a vegetable peeler
	Crusty good-quality bread, torn in chunks

Cut squash in a way that best preserves its shape and so that all types will cook in about the same amount of time. I usually cut zucchini lengthwise into halves or quarters, or into 1/4-inch slices, depending on the size. For the round squash, cut in half and then cut each half into 1/4-inch slices. (If any blossoms are still attached, slice into ribbons and add them to the mix.)

In large sauté pan, heat oil until hot. Add garlic and cook, stirring, for about a 1 to 2 minutes until fragrant. Add squash and cook, stirring, for about 10 minutes or until tender and golden. Add all but 1 tablespoon of the parsley and salt and pepper to taste. Toss well. Turn off heat.

Spoon squash mixture onto serving plate, leaving room for the cheese. Sprinkle with remaining parsley. Add Parmigiano to the platter and several chunks of bread. Serve immediately.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Variation: For a first-course, serve the zucchini mixture on top of grilled sourdough bread with a few shavings of Parmigiano Reggiano on top. Round out each plate with a small salad of lightly dressed greens or a few slices of summer's best tomatoes lightly drizzled with olive oil and sprinkled with chopped fresh basil.