

Vegetarian zucchini roll-ups

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These just picked summer garden zucchini roll-ups are first baked and then filled with a ricotta filling. Then topped with marinara sauce and more cheese before being baked again to a healthy, light deliciousness.

Zucchini makes an easy alternative to transform any dish into a healthier option and the perfect replacement for pasta. A good choice when your craving Italian and want healthy too.

Tips for perfect zucchini roll-ups

Slice the zucchini as thin as possible. You can do this by hand or use a mandoline slicer. In the video below you can see how I cut the zucchini using a knife.

Zucchini contains a lot of water. Baking the zucchini before filling draws much of the moisture out. This step also helps soften it.

And lastly, I used zucchini from my garden in this recipe. If you don't have access to your own garden store-bought is fine. It's the time of year when fresh zucchini is readily available and affordable.

Ingredients

- 3 zucchini
- 4 cups marinara sauce
- 3 cups ricotta cheese
- 1 cup grated parmesan
- 2 cups chopped spinach

- 1/2 cup breadcrumbs
- 1 egg
- salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Start by slicing the zucchini length wise as thin as possible using a knife. Drizzle with extra virgin olive oil salt and pepper to taste. roast the zucchini in a preheated 375-degree oven for 10 minutes.
2. Mean while make the filling by mixing the rest of the ingredients except for the marinara sauce.
3. line an oven proof casserole dish with half of the marinara sauce. Put one Tbsp. of the cheese filling in the center of each of the zucchini slices. roll jell roll style. Place the zucchini rolls on top of the marinara sauce top with the remaining marinara, Top with additional parmesan cheese.
4. Bake in a preheated 375-degree oven for 45 minutes.
ENJOY!!!!

Quick zucchini ricotta pasta

Quick zucchini ricotta pasta

I like making really simple pastas in the summer that highlight a main fresh seasonal ingredient. Not only is this zucchini and ricotta pasta recipe quick, it highlights one of the most prolific summer vegetables, zucchini.

This vegetarian summer pasta dish combines garden fresh

zucchini, cherry tomatoes with creamy light ricotta and the fresh taste of lemon for a pasta dish everyone will love. and the best part, the sauce is essentially ready when the pasta is cooked. What's not to love?

Variations for this quick pasta dish

This quick zucchini ricotta pasta recipe is a versatile dish, that can be adapted to a number of variations.

One would be if you don't have or like ricotta use a good farmer cheese. If you want to add in more vegetables add in 2 cups of chopped spinach. It's a great vegetarian pasta on it's own , but if you want to add cooked chicken or shrimp.

Of course pasta choice is always an option. You can use any pasta shape you like. I like using small shaped pasta in this recipe. the pasta in this recipe is anelli (Italian for small rings) . I love this classic Italian pasta shape. It can be hard to find . I ordered it on Amazon. I have attached the link.

Lastly if you make this easy, and quick summer pasta dish please leave me comment. I love hearing from you. It's my favorite part!!!

Ingredients

- 1/2 lb. small shaped pasta
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. minced garlic
- 4 Tbsp chopped shallots or onion
- 1 zucchini sliced thin

- 2 cups cherry tomatoes
- 2 cups ricotta
- 1 cup pasta water
- juice and zest from 1 lemon
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan
- 2 Tbsp.. chopped Italian parsley

Instructions

1. cook your pasta el dente while making the sauce
2. start by cutting the zucchini into medium dice
3. In a saute pan over medium high heat in the olive oil saute the garlic and shallots until soft and translucent. Then add the zucchini and tomatoes and cook until tomatoes start to burst and zucchini is crisp tender.
4. Add the pasta water and lemon juice and zest. Simmer until sauce thickens about 10 minutes. Then add the ricotta and grated parmesan. Cook just until all ingredients are well combined. Add in the pasta top with Italian parsley. ENJOY!!!

**Grilled Italian vegetable
panini**

Grilled Italian vegetable

panini

This grilled vegetable panini sandwich is made with a combination of grilled summer vegetables, creamy fresh mozzarella on pesto lined Italian bread then the entire sandwich is grilled to golden brown goodness, for an easy satisfying summer meal that's totally vegetarian.

There is something about lightly charred summer grilled vegetables sandwiched together with creamy fresh mozzarella that is just so good.

I love a good Italian panini sandwich something that's easy to put together and delicious.

Tips and tricks when you make Grilled Italian vegetable panini

1. Vegetables: I used eggplant, zucchini and red bell peppers they are easy to grill and have so much flavor. You can customize this veggie panini by adding or subtracting your favorite vegetable .
2. Pesto: I used homemade pesto if you want a short cut use a good quality store-bought pesto.
3. Bread: A good sandwich starts with good bread. I love a crusty sliced Italian bread but your favorite sliced bread will work great in this recipe. Sliced ciabatta is another great choice.
4. The grill: I use a cast iron indoor grill pan(one of my most used pan) but the vegetables can be grilled on an outside grill along with your BBQ.

Ingredients

- 4 slices Italian bread
- 1 eggplant

- 2 zucchini
- 1 red bell pepper
- 4 slices fresh mozzarella
- 1/2 cup pesto
- 2 Tbsp. butter

Instructions

1. Using a kitchen knife slice the eggplant, red bell pepper and zucchini into thin slices. Then sprinkle with the Italian herbs, salt, pepper and drizzle with extra virgin olive oil
2. On a preheated indoor or out grill grill the vegetables until cooked and slightly charred.
3. Spread the bread slices with the pesto
4. Assemble the panini by lining with the vegetables and cheese. Add the butter to a flat pan. Grill the sandwiches until golden brown on both sides about 5 minutes per side. using a spatula to press the sandwich flat. ENJOY !!!

Creamy Lemon Shrimp Bucatini

Creamy Lemon Shrimp Bucatini

I know, I post a lot of pasta recipes. But pasta is so versatile you can make a lot of pasta dishes without repeating the same one twice for awhile, besides who doesn't like pasta?

In this creamy, lemon shrimp bucatini recipe large shrimp

are covered in a light cream sauce full of Italian flavors, then tossed with bucatini pasta, for a delicious meal everyone loves.

That's not even the best part, the best part, it's a super easy shrimp and pasta recipe, that comes together in less than 30 minutes. Making this pasta recipe perfect for busy week night family meals. and it's fancy enough for Saturday dinner with friends, to show off what a good home chef you are.

3 tips for success with this creamy Lemon Shrimp bucatini recipe

The first tip for success when you make this lemon cream sauce shrimp bucatini is to use good quality large shrimp, and to be sure not to over cook them.

Second, it really doesn't matter what shape pasta you use in this recipe. What matters is not to overcook it. A good rule of thumb is to undercook it by a few minutes. You can ruin a good pasta dish just by overcooking the pasta.

And third don't underestimate the importance of the reserved pasta water. Pasta water is a magical ingredient the binds sauces together. Not only does pasta water add flavor it thickens the sauce. I always save more than the recipe calls for in case the sauce is too thick.

Lastly please leave me a note, let me know how this recipe worked out for you. I love hearing from you!!!!

Ingredients

- 1 Lb. Bucatini pasta
- 1 Lb. cleaned deveined large shrimp
- 1 cup reserved pasta water
- 1 cup white wine or chicken stock

- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan
- 2 cups chopped spinach
- Juice from 2 lemons
- 2 Tbls, butter
- 2 Tbls. olive oil
- 2 Tbls. chopped garlic
- 1/2 small chopped onion
- 2 Tbls. chopped Italian parsley
- salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Cook bucatini according to package directions reserving 1 cup of the water before draining.
 2. Meanwhile salt and pepper the shrimp according to your taste.
 3. In a large saute pan over medium heat saute the shrimp in the butter and olive oil 2 to 3 minutes per side remove and set aside.
 4. In the same pan saute the garlic and onion until tender and just beginning to brown.
 5. Deglaze the pan with the chicken stock scraping up the browned bits simmer for 2 to 3 minutes.
 6. Add the cream, lemon juice and reserved pasta water, simmer until sauce thickens about 15 minutes, add the spinach and parmesan cheese last 5 minutes.
 7. Return shrimp to sauce just to heat through.
 8. Toss pasta with lemon cream shrimp sauce sprinkle with Italian parsley and ENJOY!!!!
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Vegetarian zucchini lasagna

Vegetarian zucchini lasagna

I love a classic lasagna but when my garden is overflowing with zucchini this is vegetarian zucchini lasagna starts showing up on my table. With layers of roasted zucchini marinara and three kinds of cheese, this recipe is full of flavor everyone loves.

It's a great recipe when you are craving Italian and want low-carb too. Also a good recipe for batch cooking. Make a double batch bake one and freeze one. It can be frozen before or after baking, then thawed out and baked when you are ready to serve.

Three tips for success when making vegetarian zucchini lasagna

To keep the lasagna from being watery because of the high water content in the zucchini first salt the zucchini and let it sit for at least 30 minutes to extract the liquid. then pat dry with paper towels before roasting . Roasting also helps to extract the water.

Another step to prevent watery vegetable lasagna is to bake the lasagna uncovered for 70% of the cooking time. This allows the steam to escape.

Here is the link for the lasagna casserole dish

Ingredients

- 4 medium zucchini
- 4 cups marinara sauce

- 4 cups ricotta cheese
- 1/4 cup chopped Italian parsley
- 1 egg
- 1 1 /2 cups grated parmesan divided
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella
- 1 cup toasted bread crumbs

Instructions

1. Start by slicing your zucchini as thin as possible with a knife. Lay flat salt the zucchini slices and let sit for 30 minutes. Then pat dry to absorb the liquid.
2. roast the zucchini in a preheated 375-degree oven until lightly brown about 10 minutes.
3. Mix the ricotta with the parsley, egg, breadcrumbs and 1/2 cup of the grated parmesan.
4. In a 7 x11 casserole dish begin layering the zucchini lasagna starting with the marinara sauce, zucchini and the mozzarella repeat the process ending with zucchini, marinara and cheese.
5. Bake in a preheated 375-degree oven for 45 to 55 minutes. Let the lasagna sit for 15 minutes before cutting. ENJOY!!!

**Italian flavored chicken
spiedini**

Italian flavored chicken spiedini

Full of Italian flavors, this chicken spiedini recipe is such an easy and delicious chicken dish. Marinated chicken strips are skewered and grilled to a crispy goodness, Served with a simple yogurt sauce, this tasty dish is a good for you meal your family and friends will love.

It's such a great chicken dish for weeknight family meals and perfect for weekend BBQs with friends.

What's so good about this Italian flavored chicken spiedini

The first thing that's good about this chicken recipe is that it is delicious. It's a super easy recipe to make.

And this recipe can be made ahead of time and grilled when your ready to serve. I used my cast iron grill pan to grill the chicken spiedini indoors, but the are perfect for your outdoor grill. Also I use metal skewers. If you are using wood skewers be sure to soak them in water before using.

I made a simple dipping sauce with yogurt, minced garlic, onion and lemon juice. You can use any sauce that fits your taste, or don't use any. These chicken skewers are delicious on they're own!!!

One more thing I used chicken tenders. You can use regular boneless chicken breast or chicken thighs.

Ingredients

- 2 lbs. chicken tenders
- 1 cup olive oil

- 1/3 cup red wine vinegar
- 4 Tbls. minced garlic
- 1 Tbsp. each oregano, thyme, paprika and rosemary
- salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Start by cleaning the chicken and removing the tough white membra
 2. mix all of the rest of the ingredients in a bowl. Add the chicken tenders to the marinade and let sit in the marinade for at least thirty minutes.
 3. Heat the grill to medium high heat. meanwhile tread the marinated chicken onto metal skewers or prepared wooden skewers.
 4. Grill the chicken spiedini until golden brown about 5 minutes pre side.
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Mama's best Italian meatballs

Mama's best Italian meatballs

Mama's best Italian meatballs are a delicious blend of rich savory flavors that bring back Italy and childhood memories. Made with a mix of ground beef, veal and pork, these meatballs are seasoned with a blend of garlic, fresh Italian parsley and parmesan cheese. Bread crumbs and eggs add the tender and juicy texture.

Simmered in my easy marinara sauce, Mama's meatballs are prefect for serving over pasta in a sub or as an appetizer.

Here are some tips for making Mama's meatballs

1. Choose the right meat: A mix of ground beef, and pork for a good balance of flavor and moisture.
2. Don't over mix: Mix the ingredients just until combined. Over mixing can make the meatballs dense and tough.
3. Soak the bread: soak the breadcrumbs in milk before adding to the meat mixture. This helps to keep the meatballs soft.
4. Use a light touch: when forming the meatballs , handle them gently and don't pack them too tightly.
5. When prebaking meatballs, less is more. Bake them just until they **begin to turn golden brown**—this helps them hold their shape while staying tender and juicy once they simmer in sauce. Use a **rimmed cookie sheet lined with parchment paper** for even browning and easy cleanup.

Storage Options

- **Refrigerator:** Store cooled meatballs in an airtight container for up to 4 days. Reheat gently in marinara sauce on the stovetop.
- **Freezer:** Place cooked or parbaked meatballs on a baking sheet to freeze individually, then transfer to a freezer-safe bag or container. They'll last up to 3 months. Reheat straight from frozen in sauce until warmed through.
- ☐ Love a hearty pasta night? Try my Meatball Sunday Sauce or pair these with Classic Italian Wedding Soup.

Ingredients

- 1 lb. lean ground beef (85-15)
- 1/2 lb. ground pork
- 2 large eggs slightly beaten
- 3/4 cup milk
- 1 cup day-old bread, crust removed (or 1 cup plain breadcrumbs)
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 2 Tbsp. minced garlic
- 1 Tbsp. onion powder
- 1/2 cup Italian parsley
- salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

1. In a bowl add the milk and bread let it sit for 10 minutes or until the milk is fully absorbed. Then add the rest of the ingredients up to the meat. Mix until well combined. Then add the meats and mix just until combined.
2. With wet hands roll the meatball mixture into golf size balls.
3. Place the meatballs on a lightly greased cookie sheet and bake in a preheated 375-degree oven for 10 minutes.
4. Simmer the meatballs in my easy marinara sauce for 1 hour.

Melanzane polpetta eggplant

meatballs

Melanzane polpette eggplant meatballs

Melanzane polpette eggplant meatballs are a delicious meatless alternative to the traditional meatball recipe. Moist and flavorful with the fresh taste, light taste of ricotta cheese and the sharp taste of a good freshly grated parmesan.

No flavor is lost in this flavor and hearty Italian eggplant meatballs. It's a delicious alternative when your craving Italian flavors and want vegetarian too.

Your whole family will enjoy these tender melanzane polpette that pair perfectly with your favorite pasta. vegetable side or by themselves with crusty bread.

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Ingredients for melanzane polpette eggplant meatballs

Eggplant: Eggplant is the "meat" in this eggplant meatball and with good reason. It's rich , meaty and spongy texture holds up well and complements the other ingredients.

Almost any variety of eggplant can be used in this recipe. I

prefer to use the large globe eggplant because it has the most meaty pulp. When select an eggplant, look for a slightly firm, but not hard, texture and choose an eggplant that's heavy for it's size.

Breadcrumbs: breadcrumbs act as a binder for the eggplant mixture and also absorbs the juices from the meatballs as they cook.

Oil: I use a 50/50 blend of canola and extra virgin olive oil for frying. It has a high smoke point and the olive oil adds flavor.

Ingredients

- 1 medium eggplant
- 1 cup breadcrumbs
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan
- 2 eggs
- 2 Tbsp. chopped Italian parsley
- 1 minced garlic
- 1/3 cup chopped onions
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- salt and pepper to taste
- 2 cups oil for frying
- 4 cups marinara sauce
- 2 cups ricotta cheese
- 2 Tbsp. chopped basil

Instructions

1. cut the unpeeled eggplant into small dice. Drizzle with the olive oil, salt and roast in a 375-degree oven for 15 to 20 minutes. Mash the eggplant using a fork
2. Meanwhile in a bowl add the eggs and whisk to combine mix in the rest of the ingredients, mix well. add in the mashed eggplant and mix just until well mixed.

Refrigerate the mixture for at least 30 minutes . Then form into golf size balls

3. Bake in a 375- degree oven for 20 minutes. Heat your favorite marinara add the eggplant meatballs o the sauce. add the basil add dollops of ricotta in between the meatballs. ENJOY!!!

Zucchini ricotta penne pasta

Zucchini ricotta penne pasta

I love making easy pasta recipes in the summer that highlight the fresh ingredients of the season. This zucchini ricotta penne pasta recipe uses one of the most abundant Summer vegetables, zucchini.

The best part about this recipe is that the sauce and pasta are ready at the same time.

It may be easy and quick to make , but penne pasta with zucchini and ricotta is as delicious as any fancy restaurant dish.

This is Italian cooking at it's best easy unpretentious but really, really good.

Customize this zucchini ricotta penne pasta recipe

There is so many reasons to love this zucchini ricotta penne pasta recipe easy, quick . delicious and customizable to fit

your life style and taste.

First you can customize this recipe by using any shape pasta you like. I recently made this recipe using ditalini small tubular shaped pasta.

And you can experiment with ingredients too, You can saute pancetta or Italian sausage along with the zucchini. Fish lovers might like another variation where shrimp are saute with the zucchini.

Ingredient

1/2 Lb. penne pasta

2 medium zucchini

2 Tbsp. olive oil

2 Tbsp. butter

2 Tbsp. minced garlic

1/2 cup chopped onion

2 cups ricotta cheese

Juice from one lemon

2 ladles pasta water

1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese

1/2 cup chopped Italian parsley

Instructions

1. Cook your pasta el dente. meanwhile make the sauce. Start by washing and slicing the zucchini into half moons.
 2. Then in the olive oil and butter saute the onion and garlic until soft and just beginning to brown.
 3. Add the sliced zucchini and saute until zucchini is beginning to brown. Add the pasta water and lemon juice simmer until sauce thickens, about 10 minutes.
 4. Mix the grated parmesan with the ricotta and add to the zucchini simmer just to heat through. Toss the penne in this vegetarian sauce. Add the parsley grate more cheese over the top. ENJOY!!!
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Easy Sicilian Pasta alla Norma

Easy Sicilian Pasta alla Norma

Pasta alla Norma also called pasta con le melanzane pasta with eggplant in English is a classic Sicilian pasta dish. It is an easy recipe that uses few ingredients and comes together in less than an hour.

It is made of pasta with tomato sauce fried eggplant and served with grated ricotta sala da grated cheese and basil.

This traditional Italian pasta is a satisfying vegetarian

dinner, and it can be ready in under an hour.

Things to know about this Easy Sicilian pasta alla Norma recipe

The first thing is to choose dense, heavy eggplants and slowly frying them until caramelized results in a tender, meaty eggplant texture.

Second if aged ricotta salata is unavailable, a combination of different cheeses can replicate its salty, sharp taste. You could use Pecorino Romano or feta.

If you make this recipe, be sure to leave me a comment. Above all, I love to hear how the recipe turns out in your kitchen.

Ingredients

- 1/2 Lb. rigatoni
- 1 medium eggplant
- 4 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 Tbsp. minced garlic
- 1/2 cup chopped onions
- 2 cups crushed tomatoes
- 2 cups tomato sauce
- 1 cup pasta water
- 1/2 cup grated ricotta salata or parmesan
- a few basil leaves
- 3 cups olive oil canola blend for frying

Instructions

1. Start by washing and drying the eggplant cut into medium size
2. Bring the frying oil to medium high heat. fry the eggplant until golden brown. remove and drain on paper

towels.

3. Meanwhile cook the pasta el dente and start on the sauce
4. In a saute pan add the 4 Tbsp. of olive oil. Then over medium high heat add the onion and garlic and saute until soft and just beginning to brown.
5. Add the tomatoes, pasta water and red wine. simmer until sauce thickens about 20 minutes. Add the fried eggplant and simmer 10 minutes longer. Toss the pasta in the eggplant sauce add the basil.
6. Plate grate the cheese over the top. ENJOY!!!!