

Zucchini with pesto

Dan Ralston's Kitchen

Serves 6

6 medium zucchini
3 Tbs. olive oil
1 cup pesto (recipe follows)

Use the fine julienne blade of a food processor or coarse grater and julienne/shred the zucchini. Place in 2 inch layers in a colander, lightly salting each layer, and let drain for 20 minutes. Rinse and shake out excess moisture. Let it drain another 10 minutes. Heat oil in a large skillet until a haze forms. Sauté the zucchini, tossing frequently, until heated through but still crunchy (about 6 minutes). Place on individual warm plates and top each with 2 Tbs. pesto.

Pesto

2 cups fresh basil leaves, washed and patted dry
2 medium cloves garlic
1 cup raw almonds or walnuts
1 cup good olive oil
1 cup grated parmesan
1/4 cup grated romano
Salt and pepper to taste (to my taste this pesto takes a generous amount of both)

Although most pesto recipes call for pine nuts I found (by being without pine nuts one night) that almonds or walnuts make for a richer and smoother sauce, I hope you agree. In a food processor with the metal blade chop the basil, garlic, and nuts. With the motor running add the olive oil in a steady stream. Stop and add the cheeses, salt and pepper and process just long enough to thoroughly incorporate. Makes 2 cups. The sauce will keep well for weeks if refrigerated and is great on pasta, grilled chicken breasts, sautéed eggplant, etc. Just allow to come to room temperature before using.