

Stuffed courgette flowers with fresh tomato sauce

less than 30 mins

preparation time

10 to 30 mins

cooking time

Serves 4

Ingredients

For the stuffed courgette flowers

- 100g/3½oz ricotta
- 30g/1¼oz parmesan cheese, grated
- 25g/1oz parma ham, finely chopped
- handful fresh basil leaves, torn
- pinch grated nutmeg
- ½ lemon, zest only
- 200g/7oz mozzarella
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 8 courgette flowers, stamen removed
- 6 anchovies
- 1 free-range egg
- 100ml/3½fl oz whole milk
- 110g/4oz plain flour
- 60ml/2¼fl oz beer, or sparkling water
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp caster sugar
- vegetable oil, for frying

To serve

- lemon wedges
- bread

For the fresh tomato sauce

- 500g/1lb 1oz ripe tomatoes, peeled, seeds removed, diced
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 sprig fresh basil

Preparation method

1. For the stuffed courgette flowers, mix the ricotta, parmesan, parma ham, basil, nutmeg and lemon zest in a bowl until combined. Finely chop half of the mozzarella and add to the mixture. Season, to taste, with salt and freshly ground black pepper.
2. Spoon the mixture into a piping bag and squeeze it into the half of the courgette flowers, twisting the ends to keep the filling in.
3. Stuff the remaining mozzarella inside the remaining courgette flowers and place an anchovy inside each flower. Twist the ends closed.

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- 4. Whisk the egg and two tablespoons of the milk in a large bowl for one minute. Whisk in the flour, a little at a time, then whisk in the beer, salt, sugar and the remaining milk.**
5. Half fill a deep heavy-based frying pan with the oil and heat until a breadcrumb sizzles and turns brown when dropped into it.
(CAUTION: hot oil can be dangerous. Do not leave unattended.)
6. Dip the courgettes in the batter and carefully lower into the oil, fry for 1-2 minutes on each side, or until golden-brown on both sides.
7. For the fresh tomato sauce, make a cross in the bottom of the tomatoes and blanch in boiling water for one minute; remove and refresh in a bowl of iced cold water. Peel the tomatoes and remove the seeds. Cut the tomatoes into small dice.
8. Heat the olive oil in a frying pan and fry the garlic for one minute. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper and add the tomatoes and basil. Cook for a further five minutes until the tomatoes have softened, remove the garlic clove and basil and blend in a food processor until smooth.
9. To serve, place two of the courgette flowers onto each of four serving plates. Spoon the tomato sauce alongside and garnish with lemon wedges. Serve with bread.