

Squash Blossoms Stuffed with Ricotta

BY ANDREA ALBIN GOURMET SEPTEMBER 2009

Yield/Makes 4 (first course) or 2 (main course) servings

Ingredients

For tomato sauce:

1 garlic clove, minced

1/4 teaspoon hot red pepper flakes

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 1/2 pound tomatoes, finely chopped

1/2 cup water

1/2 teaspoon sugar

For squash blossoms:

1 cup whole-milk ricotta (preferably fresh)

1 large egg yolk

1/4 cup finely chopped mint

2/3 cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, divided

12 to 16 large zucchini squash blossoms

1/2 cup plus 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour

3/4 cup chilled seltzer or club soda

About 3 cups vegetable oil for frying

Equipment: a deep-fat thermometer

Preparation

Make tomato sauce:

Cook garlic and red pepper flakes in oil in a 2-quarts heavy saucepan over medium heat, stirring, until garlic is golden, about 30 seconds. Add tomatoes, water, sugar, and 1/2 teaspoon salt and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until thickened, 25 to 30 minutes.

Prepare squash blossoms:

Stir together ricotta, yolk, mint, 1/3 cup parmesan, and 1/8 teaspoon each of salt and pepper.

Carefully open each blossom and fill with about 2 rounded teaspoon ricotta filling, gently twisting end of blossom to enclose filling. (You may have filling left over.)

Whisk together flour, remaining 1/3 cup parmesan, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and seltzer in a small bowl. Heat 1/2 inch oil to 375°F in a 10-inch heavy skillet. Meanwhile, dip half of blossoms in batter to thinly coat. Fry coated blossoms, turning once, until golden, 1 to 2 minutes total. Transfer with tongs to paper towels to drain. Coat and fry remaining blossoms. (Return oil to 375°F between batches.) Season with salt. Serve with tomato sauce.

Cooks' note:

Tomato sauce and ricotta filling can be made 1 day ahead and chilled. Reheat sauce before serving.