


Spicy Zucchini Parm Skillet With Orzo

By Aaron Hutcherson

 Servings: 4-6 (makes about 9 cups)

 Total: 45 mins

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more as needed
1 onion, chopped
- 2 large zucchini (1 1/2 pounds total), trimmed, quartered lengthwise and sliced 1/4 inch thick
- 1/2 teaspoon fine salt, plus more as needed
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, plus more as needed
- 8 ounces (1 1/4 cups) dried orzo pasta *
- 6 garlic cloves, minced or finely grated
1 T tomato paste
- One (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes, preferably no-salt-added *- fire roasted*
- 2 cups water *or vegetable stock*
- 1 tablespoon chopped Calabrian chiles in oil, plus more as needed (see Where to buy)
1/2 lb frozen white corn
- 1 tablespoon homemade or store-bought Italian seasoning (see related recipe)
- 1 1/2 cups (6 ounces) shredded, low-moisture mozzarella cheese (whole-milk or part-skim)
- 1/2 cup (1 ounce) freshly grated parmesan cheese

* Can use 10-oz box of Banilla chickpea orzo.
May need to add 1/4 - 1/2 cup extra water, check while orzo is cooking

Step 1

Position a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat to 400 degrees.

Step 2

first cook onion for 5-10 mins then add zucchini
In a large (12-inch), deep, oven-safe nonstick, stainless steel or enameled cast-iron skillet or sauté pan over medium-high heat, heat the oil until shimmering. (We don't recommend using a nonstick skillet if you want to leave open the option to broil.) Add the zucchini, season with the salt and pepper, and cook, stirring occasionally and adding more oil if the pan looks dry, until somewhat soft and lightly browned, 7 to 10 minutes.

Step 3

add tomato paste w/ garlic
add corn with tomatoes
Add the orzo and garlic, and cook, stirring occasionally, until fragrant and lightly toasted, about 1 minute. Stir in the tomatoes, water, chiles and Italian seasoning, and bring to a simmer. Cook, stirring frequently and scraping the bottom of the pan to make sure nothing sticks and burns, until the orzo is al dente and most of the liquid is absorbed, 10 to 13 minutes. Adjust the heat as needed to maintain a gentle simmer.

Step 4

Remove from the heat. Taste, and season with more salt, pepper and chiles, as desired. Sprinkle with the mozzarella and parmesan, transfer to the oven and bake for about 5 minutes, or until the cheese is melted.

Step 5

If you want to brown the top under the broiler, remove the skillet from the oven, carefully raise the rack to 5 or 6 inches from the broiling element, and preheat the broiler to HIGH. (Most nonstick skillets are not broiler-safe.) Return the skillet to the oven and broil for 2 to 3 minutes, or until the cheese is browned in spots. (If your broiler is on the bottom, transfer the baking dish to the broiler drawer.) Let sit for 5 to 10 minutes, and serve warm.

Substitutions

Zucchini >> other summer squash.

Orzo >> other small pasta shapes.

Garlic cloves >> 1 tablespoon garlic powder.

Water >> chicken or vegetable broth or stock.

Calabrian chiles >> 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes.

Want less spice? >> Reduce or omit the Calabrian chiles.