

Laura's Pasta alla Crema di Zuchine

This week at the Roslindale Farmers' Market, the shining stars of the Brookwood Farm table, were the squashes. Beautiful rounded kousa squash, vibrant yellow Sebring summer squash, and shiny spineless perfection green zucchini were just inviting people to take them home. I too became inspired with the squashes this week, and decided to create a new dish, featuring my favorite vegetable as a child.

I was raised in a Sicilian-American family that always appreciated fresh, local, produce. My nonno, an architect, had an impeccably organized vegetable garden, with perfectly straight rows and evenly spaced plants. I remember the pride in his eyes as he presented the fruits of his labor, and the photos of him holding the zucchini, always larger and longer than the previous year. My nonna always made the most delicious meals from the bounty. As a little girl, I fondly recall the sweet smell that filled the kitchen as she patiently fried the zucchini rounds in garlic and olive oil, until they became a perfect golden brown. She sprinkled them with sea salt, and rested them on a plate lined with paper towel, as I would sneak behind her to pop one in my mouth. They tasted better than candy.

This recipe is inspired by this memory, offering a new twist on a classic pairing ... zucchini and pasta. While the title includes the word "crema", or cream, there is no cream in this dish at all. It simply refers to the creamy texture of the sauce that is created. In the end, I made a meal for my family that is truly Italian...easy to execute and delicious to eat! I decided to share it with everyone at the farmer's market this week, and now you can try it for yourself!

1 cup of organic extra virgin olive oil (I recommend Monini Fruttato)
2 teaspoons of organic raw sugar
3 garlic scapes from Brookwood Farm (or one clove of garlic)
4-5 of a variety of zucchini from Brookwood Farm
1 organic spring onion
½ cup of Italian parsley
¼-½ cup of mint

½ cup of plain breadcrumbs
¼ cup of sliced almonds
2 tablespoons of pink Himalayan sea salt
1 cup of dry rose' wine from Esprit du Vin in Milton, MA!
1 package of small ribbed pasta ... like baby shells, gnocchetti, or ditalini
(I highly recommend Rustichella d' Abruzzo brand)

Grind the raw almonds in a food processor and put aside
Heat up ½ cup of olive oil with one garlic scape cut into 1-inch pieces

Cut one zucchini into thin slices and fry them in the oil with garlic scapes

Cook the zucchini until golden brown on both sides, then lay them on a plate lined with paper towel, sprinkle with sea salt, and set aside
Heat remaining olive oil with garlic scapes, cut in 1-inch pieces, and spring onion, finely chopped

Cook the onion on low for 5 minutes until transparent. Then add sugar and sauté again until onions are Carmelized

Bring a large pot of water to boil with 1 tablespoons of pink Himalayan sea salt

Cut zucchini in quarters lengthwise, and then slice the quarters into 1-inch pieces

Add zucchini to the olive oil and onion mixture

Let zucchini cook with onion for 7-10 minutes, stirring occasionally
Add rose' wine and cook again on medium high for 7 minutes more or until zucchini are cooked

Roughly chop the parsley and mint, add it to the pot, and cook for one additional minute

Process the entire mixture with a Cuisinart hand blender or food processor until smooth

Add 3 teaspoons of fine Himalayan sea salt and 2 teaspoons of fresh ground black pepper and process again

Drop the pasta into the salted water

Mix the breadcrumbs and ground almonds together with ½ teaspoon of sea salt

Heat ¼ cup of olive oil and cook the bread crumb and almond mixture until browned and put aside

Once the pasta is cooked, drain it well and mix with the processed “crema di zucchini”

Plate the pasta in a bowl, sprinkle bread crumb mixture on top, drizzle with extra virgin olive oil

Put a few pieces of the previously fried zucchini pieces on top and garnish with freshly cut mint, and serve.

Pair with a sparkling dry Rose and “WOW” your friends!

BUON APPETITO!

Laura Sabini © 2012