



Mexican Stuffed Zucchini

By Chef Veera Gaul, Ph.D.



Ingredients

(* indicates my preferred ingredients – see notes for alternatives)

- 4 round zucchini or long zucchini (See Chef Tip)
- 3-4 tablespoons O&V [Garlic EVOO](#) *
- ½ lb ground chicken
- ½ orange pepper, diced
- 2-3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons O&V [Guacamole Seasoning mix](#) *
- ½ teaspoon cumin powder
- ¼ cup homemade or store-bought salsa (more for serving)
- 1 cup cooked cauliflower rice (See Chef Tip)
- ½ cup frozen corn kernels or from one fresh cob
- 2 tablespoons shredded mozzarella or Mexican cheese
- 4 tablespoons queso fresco or cotija cheese for serving

Preparation

Preheat the oven to 375F. Lightly grease a baking sheet.

Place the guacamole seasoning in a bowl and add 1 tablespoon of water. Let sit for 5 minutes.

If using round zucchini, cut the zucchini to create a bowl (about ¼ of the way down from the top of the vegetable). Scrape out the insides of the larger piece including the seeds, but leave about ½ inch of zucchini on all sides to ensure that it holds its shape. Chop and reserve the scooped-out zucchini. (See Chef note for long zucchini)

Lightly brush the zucchini all over with 1 tablespoon of oil. Place on the prepared baking sheet cut side down and bake in the oven for 10-15 minutes (based on the size of your zucchini). Remove and allow to cool enough to handle.

In the meantime, heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the ground chicken and cook until no longer pink. Add the diced orange pepper and sauté for another 2 minutes.

Add the reserved scooped out zucchini, minced garlic, cumin and rehydrated Guacamole seasoning mix. Cook for 2-3 minutes, then add the salsa and cook an additional 5-8 minutes, stirring regularly. Cook until any pooling water evaporates leaving the mixture moist but not wet. Remove from heat.

Separately prepare the cauliflower rice and thaw the corn kernels (drain any accumulated water).

In a bowl combine the cooked meat, cauliflower rice and corn kernels. Add 2 tablespoons mozzarella or shredded Mexican cheese. Mix well.

Turn the zucchini over so that the cut side is facing up. Fill the scooped-out part of the zucchini with the cauliflower/meat mixture. Top each zucchini with a little cotija cheese and return to the oven for an additional 10-12 minutes until the cheese has melted and the zucchini is fully cooked.

Remove and serve hot topped with additional crumbled cotija cheese, salsa and a sprinkle of cilantro leaves.

Serves 4

Active time 50 minutes Total Time: 60 minutes

Chef Tips

Zucchini: If using long zucchini, cut them in half along the length, scoop out the center including seeds leaving a nice edge of zucchini so they hold their shape after cooking. Then follow the same instructions above.

This dish can be made in advance, and refrigerated, just reheat in a 350 F oven for 10 minutes and then place under a broiler to finish.

Cauliflower Rice: To make at home, blitz chopped cauliflower in a food processor till it resembles rice kernels. Toss with a quick drizzle of EVOO, salt and pepper. Then lay out on a baking sheet and bake for 10-12 minutes in a 400F oven.

Notes

* The amazing flavor of the stuffing comes from the [Guacamole Seasoning mix](#). If you would like to make your own Mexican inspired spice blend, you can do so, or email me for my suggestions.

The [Garlic EVOO](#) provides great garlicky flavor. Feel free to use a plain oil, but remember to add a little additional garlic to the stuffing.

Categories: Entrée, Easy Lunch, Weeknight Dinner, Garlic EVOO, Guacamole Seasoning Mix, Cauliflower Rice, Mexican Inspired Stuffed Zucchini, Salsa Summer Eating, Vegetarian Option, Gluten Free,