

Summer Pasta with Zucchini, Ricotta and Basil

By David Tanis from NYT Cooking

Ingredients:

olive oil
1 small onion, finely diced
2 lbs zucchini, sliced into 1/4 inch pieces
salt and pepper
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 cups loose basil leaves
1 lb dry pasta
1 cup ricotta
crushed red pepper
zest of 1 lemon
1 cup grated parmesan

Directions:

1. Put a pot of water on to boil. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, cook the onions in 3 tbsp olive oil until softened, 5-8 minutes. Reduce heat as necessary to keep onions from browning. Add zucchini, season generously with salt and pepper, and continue cooking, stirring occasionally until soft, about 10 minutes. Turn off heat.
2. Meanwhile, use a mortar and pestle or small food processor to pound garlic, basil and a little salt into a rough paste. Stir in 3 tbsp olive oil.
3. Salt the pasta water well and put in the pasta. Cook until al dente. Drain, and reserve 1 cup cooking water.
4. Add cooked pasta to zucchini in skillet and turn heat on to medium-high. Add 1/2 cup cooking water, then the ricotta, crushed red pepper, and lemon zest, stirring to distribute. Check seasoning and adjust. Cook for 1 minute more. Mixture should look creamy. Add a little more pasta water if necessary. Add the basil paste and half the grated cheese and quickly stir to incorporate. Spoon pasta into warm soup plates and sprinkle with additional cheese. Serve immediately.