

Savory Zucchini, Clam and Virginia Ham Crouton

Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

Ingredients:

- 2 ea. medium firm zucchini
- 2 ea. medium firm yellow squash, medium dice, skin only
- 2 ea. pasta/Manila clams (steamed open, removed from shell and chopped)
- 1 C olive oil
- 1 C diced onions
- ½ C diced celery
- 1 ½ C diced peppers (yellow, green, red)
- ¼ C chopped garlic
- ½ lb Virginia ham, diced
- 1–2 C vegetable or chicken stock
- ¼ C chopped parsley, chive, basil and oregano
- ½ C crumbled corn muffins
- 1 ½-2 C small diced stale white bread (toasted)
- ½ C diced shallots
- ¼ C grated Parmesan cheese
- Salt and Pepper to taste
- 1/3 C Old Bay Seasoning

Method:

1. Cut both ends evenly from zucchini; cut in 1/8" even disks with small melon baller or teaspoon. Remove inner flesh leaving small amount of flesh around sides and bottom. Wash zucchini and set aside.
2. In a small non-stick skillet, heat the olive oil. Add ½ C shallots and a pinch of garlic. Sauté until transparent. Add zucchini disks along with little of the vegetable or chicken stock. Bring to a quick simmer while constantly moving the pan. Add 1 T chopped herbs and season with salt and pepper as needed. Keep at room temperature (disks must be still firm).
3. In a separate stainless steel pot, heat remaining olive oil.
4. Add onions, garlic, peppers, celery and squash.
5. Sauté while constantly stirring until all vegetables are nearly cooked.
6. Add chopped clams.
7. Add diced Virginia ham.
8. Add chopped herbs
9. Add vegetable or chicken stock
10. Bring to a quick boil and remove from heat
11. Add crumpled corn muffins and toasted bread
12. With wooden spoon, stir mixture and add more liquid if needed. Add more bread if too moist.
13. Season with Old Bay Seasoning, salt and pepper, dash of Tabasco and Lea and Perrins sauce.
14. Divide mixture equally into zucchini cups, sprinkle with Parmesan cheese
15. Place cups on greased baking pan and bake at 350 for approximately 10 minutes or until cheese has melted.

Chef's tips:

- ✓ Croutons can be prepared two days in advance.
- ✓ Stuffing can be altered with crabmeat or chopped shrimp or left plain. If left plain, shiitake mushrooms and tomatoes are options.
- ✓ Stuffing is also suitable for stuffing shrimps or topping a piece of fish and baking it.

Bon Appetit!