

TASTING TABLE

Chefs' Recipes



Tues. 08 Jun '10

Pesto Change-O

A versatile sauce from a globe-trotting chef

Over the past decade, chef Ken Oringer has enlivened the Boston dining scene with his stable of restaurants. His latest, [Coppa](#), puts an Italian imprint on the small-plates genre. Fans go for fresh interpretations of familiar dishes, such as this crostini topped with a vibrant pesto whose surprising star ingredient is raw zucchini. The vegetable's delicate sweetness is accented by toasted marcona almonds, which stand in for the usual pine nuts. This versatile pesto is also ideal for an effortless dinner, either tossed with pasta or spooned over grilled chicken.

Crostini with Zucchini Pesto

Recipe adapted from Ken Oringer, Coppa, Boston

Yield: 6 appetizer servings (about 12 crostini)

INGREDIENTS

3 medium zucchini (about 1 pound)

2 teaspoons salt, plus more to taste

2 garlic cloves, minced

¼ cup shredded basil

½ cup marcona almonds, toasted and finely chopped

1 tablespoon thyme leaves, chopped

½ cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice

½ teaspoon finely grated lemon zest

4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided

Freshly ground black pepper

1 loaf ciabatta bread, cut into ¼-inch slices (about 12 slices)

DIRECTIONS

1. Using a box grater, coarsely grate the zucchini. Place the shredded zucchini in the middle of a clean kitchen towel and sprinkle with the 2 teaspoons of salt. Let sit for 5 minutes, then squeeze the towel to remove excess moisture. Repeat until as much liquid as possible has been released, then transfer the zucchini to a bowl.

2. Add the garlic, basil, almonds, thyme, Parmigiano-Reggiano, lemon juice, lemon zest and 3 tablespoons of the olive oil to the zucchini; toss to combine. Season to taste with salt and pepper and refrigerate for an hour.

3. Just before serving, drizzle the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil over the bread and grill or broil the bread until toasted, then let cool.

4. Top each slice of bread with about 3 tablespoons of the zucchini pesto and serve immediately.

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