



Chicken-fried Squash Blossoms with Basil and Mozzarella

16 large squash or zucchini blossoms

1/2 lb. mozzarella balls, room temperature*

1 garlic clove

1 teaspoon oil

1/2 tsp. cracked pepper or Aux Poivres Spice Blend

1/2 tsp. nutmeg or New Regime Spice Blend

Pinch of salt

16 basil leaves

1/2 cup all purpose flour or as needed

1 to 2 eggs, lightly beaten

1 cup Italian bread crumbs or as needed

Oil for frying

Serve with: 1 (16 ounce) can crushed Italian flavored tomatoes

Open the flowers by ripping them down one side. Remove the stamen from flowers; lay out flat on a cookie sheet. Cut the cheese into cubes to fit your blossoms and toss in bowl with garlic, olive oil, spices, and salt. ** Wrap each piece of cheese in large basil leaf. Place one in each flower. Wrap the petals around the cheese and fold the end over to form a package. Give the flower a light squeeze to tighten the package.

To serve: dredge in flour, then beaten egg, and then bread crumbs. Sauté in hot oil until crispy. Drain on paper lined plate. Serve with crushed fresh tomato sauce as an appetizer or place crispy blossoms on warm crushed tomatoes as a main dish.

Chef Orr uses the delicate blossoms to step in for meat. This is based on a dish that he learned about in Milan, Italy.

Cook's Notes: Adjust your recipe according to the size of your squash blossoms

*I filled my blossoms with some prepared risotto. You could also mince a small amount of fresh mozzarella with the risotto if desired.

**I omitted the garlic, spices, olive oil, and salt. You could just substitute some small marinated mozzarella balls from the deli counter.

About the Recipe: Take a quick trip to Italian. Locate some young zucchini or squash blossoms; stuff them with some risotto or cheese, and give them a crunchy coating. Nestle them on some warm Italian tomato sauce and enjoy a most wonderful tasting dinner dish. Magnifico!

