



## **Spinach Salad with Crunchy Zucchini Sticks and Stuffed Blossoms**

### **Zucchini Squash Flowers (Adapted Recipe)**

8 small zucchini blossoms

1 to 2 ounces deli Italian flavored small mozzarella balls

8 fresh small basil leaves

Salt and ground black pepper to taste

1/4 cup all purpose flour or as needed

1 egg

1/4 to 1/2 cup Italian bread crumbs

Oil for frying; about 1/4 to 1/2 cup

Open the flowers by ripping them down one side. Remove the stamen from flowers. Lightly wash flowers; lay out flat between damp paper towels to remove moisture.

Cut each cheese ball into 4 small cubes. For each flower blossom. Place 1 basil leaf and cheese cube inside blossom. Wrap basil and cheese inside each flower, folding the end over to form a package. Give the flower a light squeeze to tighten the package.

Add salt and pepper to flour mixture; and then season beaten egg.

Dredge each blossom packet in flour, then egg, and then bread crumbs to coat. Place in freezer for 15 minutes to chill.

Sauté blossoms in 10 inch skillet or deep fryer in oil.

Serve with breaded 3-inch baby zucchini and thin fresh tomato wedges.

If desired: Use Sautéed Zucchini with Parmesan Crumbles in place of deep frying:

**Sautéed Zucchini with Parmesan Crumbles**

2 Tablespoon (each) olive oil, unsalted butter

4 baby zucchini (5 inches long)

4 Tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

4 Tablespoons Italian bread crumbs

**To Serve:**

1 6 oz.) container fresh baby spinach

2 to 3 Tablespoon light Italian dressing

1 large Roma tomatoes, seeded, sliced in thin wedges

1 large Roma tomato, form into shell

Additional grated Parmesan cheese as desired

Lengthwise cut each 5 inch zucchini into 4 pieces.

Place oil and butter in hot 12 inch sauté skillet; add baby zucchini and cook 1 to 2 minutes; toss zucchini with grated Parmesan cheese; toss in bread crumbs to form crumbles, about 1 to 2 minutes.

Set aside.

Arrange salad platter: In a bowl, lightly toss spinach with dressing to serve. Place in center of large round platter. Alternately arrange a circle pattern placing zucchini and tomatoes vertically in a circle on spinach mound. Cut remaining tomato into petal shape shell; arrange squash blossom inside tomato shell. Sprinkle with additional grated Parmesan cheese as desired.

Serve: 4 to 6

**About the Recipe:** Take a salad trip to Italian. Locate some petite zucchini blossoms; stuff them, and give them a crunch coating. Sauté the petite zucchini lightly with Parmesan crisp flavor and with some thin tomato wedges arrange attractively around vibrant spinach leaves. Magnifico!