

Zucchini “Jam”

Another of my vegetable jams. This was inspired by a “ratatouille” I started when I realized I had no eggplant or peppers, and I was already making a fennel jam.

INGREDIENTS:

1 rib of celery
½ medium brown onion
3 small-medium zucchini
1-2 large clove garlic, peeled and de-germed
1 large tomato, peeled and seeded
Salt and fresh ground pepper to taste
5-10 medium basil leaves
Water or stock as needed
Olive oil

METHOD:

Medium dice the celery, onion, and zucchini.

Mince the garlic.

Medium dice the tomato. Don’t worry too much if it is not exact-it will melt and form the “binder” of the jam.

Chiffonade the basil. (This means to stack the leaves on top on each other, cut off the stem, and roll the leaves from the stem up. Then, using a sharp knife, thinly slice across the roll to produce fine shreds. The sharp knife allows for finer shreds and keeps the basil from turning black right away.)

Over medium heat, warm a medium sized chefs pan or sauté pan. When the pan is hot, add enough oil to coat the bottom of the pan.

When the oil starts to shimmer and move freely in the pan bottom, it is hot enough.

Add the celery and onions, and sauté until they are softened and starting to turn golden.

Add the zucchini, and toss to coat with oil. Add a touch more oil if necessary to just coat the zucchini.

Continue to cook, coloring the edges of the squash and softening the vegetables, tossing to keep from burning but allowing for caramelisation.

Sprinkle the garlic over the contents of the pan, and then toss to mix in.

Cook a few more minutes until you smell the garlic.

Add the tomato, and toss to combine. Reduce the heat to low. Sprinkle with a pinch of salt. (This will help the

tomato give up it's liquid.) If the contents of the pan seem dry, add a shot of water or stock, or even white wine if you have some sitting around.

Cook, stirring occasionally, to get a jam-like consistency. Add liquid as needed to keep the contents a little loose as the glaze forms.

When the "jam" has formed, season with a little salt and the pepper, and taste for balance. If the dish seems a little flat, try adding a splash of vinegar such as sherry, white wine, or white balsamic. Remember-you can always add more! Start with a little, and then add more if needed. If the dish seems a touch on the bitter side, a pinch of sugar will be what is needed to correct the balance.

When the jam has the balance you like, add in the basil chiffonade and stir to evenly combine throughout. Remove the pan from the heat and allow to cool. The residual heat will release the flavors of the basil.

Chef's Notes and Tips:

Use this on toasted country bread, toss some into grains, smear on sandwiches, or you can even use it on pasta in a pinch. Just cook the pasta and use some of the pasta water to get the jam to a sauce consistency.

Yield: Around 1 pint

Source: Chef Andrew E Cohen