

## BAKED COURGETTES WITH MOZZARELLA & PARMESAN

### ZUCCHINE AL FORNO CON MOZZARELLA E PARMIGIANO

This dish is extremely popular on the west coast of Italy, where it is often served as an accompaniment to chargrilled fish. The tomato sauce can be made ahead and the whole dish assembled several hours ahead of cooking. Just add on an extra 5 minutes to the cooking time if it's being cooked from cold. Serve with warm, crusty bread.

Serves 6  
as a side  
dish, 4 as  
a main  
course

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil	250ml olive oil, plus extra for greasing
2 large garlic cloves, peeled and halved	80g freshly grated Parmesan cheese
2 x 400g tins of chopped tomatoes	2 x 125g balls of mozzarella cheese, drained and cut into small cubes
12 fresh basil leaves, roughly torn	Salt and freshly ground black pepper
9 large courgettes, cut lengthways into slices 5mm thick	

1] Heat the extra virgin olive oil in a medium saucepan over a medium heat. Add the garlic and fry for 1 minute. Add the tomatoes, 6 basil leaves and salt. Simmer for about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until quite thick. Set aside and discard the garlic.

2] Put the courgettes in a colander placed over the sink and sprinkle salt between the layers (this will draw out the moisture). Leave for 15–30 minutes, then rinse in cold water to remove the salt. Drain on kitchen paper and pat dry.

3] Heat the olive oil in a large non-stick frying pan over a medium heat. Add a single layer of courgettes and fry for about 2 minutes each side or until lightly coloured. Drain on kitchen paper, laying kitchen paper between the layers to absorb excess oil. Fry and drain the remaining courgettes in batches in the same way. Set aside.

4] Preheat the oven to 200°C/gas mark 6. Grease a baking dish, about 24 x 28cm, with a little oil. Spread one third of the tomato sauce in the dish. Place half of the courgettes on top, then scatter over half each of the basil, mozzarella and the Parmesan. Season with salt and pepper. Add another one third of the tomato sauce, then arrange the remaining courgettes and remaining basil on top. Season again with salt and pepper. Spread over the remaining tomato sauce and finish with the remaining mozzarella and Parmesan.

5] Bake for 45 minutes until bubbling and golden brown.

