Eggplant and Zucchini Parmesan

The comforting family meal is perfect during the spring and summer months when eggplant and zucchini are at their peak. A quick homemade marinara sauce adds a burst of fresh flavor.

**Marinara sauce:**
- 2 small eggplants (about 6-8” each)
- 2 zucchini
- 1 T. extra virgin oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 (28 oz.) can crushed tomatoes
- 1 tsp. dry Italian seasoning (basil, thyme, oregano)
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 1/8 tsp. crushed red pepper

Preheat oven to 425° F. Fill a large pot with water, cover, and bring to a boil over high heat.

**Marinara sauce:** In a medium saucepan, warm oil over medium heat. Add onions and garlic, sauté 7-10 minutes until softened. Add crushed tomatoes, 1 tsp. dry Italian seasoning, sugar, black pepper, and crushed red pepper. Simmer over medium-low heat until pasta is ready.

**Bake vegetables:** Slice eggplant and zucchini crosswise on a sharp diagonal into ½” slices. In a shallow bowl, lightly beat egg. In another shallow bowl, combine breadcrumbs, Parmesan, wheat germ, 1 tsp. dry Italian seasoning, and pepper. Lightly grease a large baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray or vegetable oil. Dip eggplant and zucchini slices in egg and then breadcrumb mixture, coating both sides well; place in a single layer on baking sheet. Bake at 425° F for 10 minutes.

**Cook pasta:** Once vegetables are in the oven for about 5 minutes, add pasta to boiling water. Lower to medium-high heat, and simmer for 7 minutes until almost al dente. Drain pasta and return to pot. Stir in half of marinara sauce and simmer over medium-low heat 1-2 minutes until al dente.

**Top vegetables:** Turn vegetables over on baking sheet with a spatula. Spoon a little marinara sauce over each slice and top with mozzarella cheese. Return to oven and bake 5 minutes until cheese is melted.

**Serve:** Serve Eggplant and Zucchini Parmesan slices over or beside spaghetti. Garnish with fresh chopped parsley if desired.

Nutrition Information (per 1/4 recipe): 519 cal, 28 g protein, 15 g fat, 5 g sat. fat, 0 g trans fat, 75 g carb, 16 g fiber, 80 mg chol, 745 mg sodium. 1 serving equals: 4 vegetables, 2 whole grain equivalents, 1 protein/dairy, 1 fat

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Shopping List

Produce Section
- 2 small eggplants (about 6-8” each) (see tip #1)
- 2 zucchini
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 T. fresh chopped parsley to garnish, optional

Dry Goods Section
- 8 oz. uncooked whole wheat linguini
- 1 (28 oz.) can crushed tomatoes (see tip #2)
- 1 cup whole wheat breadcrumbs (see tip #3)
- ½ cup wheat germ
- 1 T. extra virgin oil
- 2 tsp. dried Italian seasoning (basil, thyme, oregano)
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 1/8 tsp. crushed red pepper

Dairy Section
- 1 cup shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 egg

Smart Shopper Tip #1:
If you have never used eggplant, this is a great recipe to try. Eggplant has a meaty texture when cooked and will soak up the flavors of the sauce that it is cooked in.
Choose smaller, firm eggplants because they will have fewer seeds and less bitterness. The skins should be unblemished with no signs of bruising.
The dark purple globe variety is the most common eggplant. Feel free to experiment with other varieties at your local farmer's market, such as white or striped eggplants. They all have similar flavors.
Leave the skin on whenever possible for additional fiber and nutrients.

Smart Shopper Tip #2:
This homemade marinara sauce is very simple to make. Feel free to tailor the seasonings to your own preference.
A good brand of canned crushed tomatoes, such as Cento or Muir Glen will make a big difference in this simple sauce. The fire-roasted variety would also be delicious.
If you prefer, feel free to use a lower-sodium store bought jarred marinara sauce.

Smart Shopper Tip #3:
To make whole wheat breadcrumbs, simply pulse dry whole wheat bread in your food processor. Extra crumbs will keep in the freezer. Two slices of bread yield about 1 cup.