



TOUGHEST TABLE



COOKING FOR THOSE YOU LOVE

TOUGHESTTABLE.COM

A Zoodle You Can't Resist...

AS A JEWISH GUY FROM NYC WHO IS NOT LIVING IN NYC, the access to great Italian food that I experienced all over the Northeast, has not yet hit the Rocky Mountains, no matter how cool a food place Denver has become. I crave anything cooked with garlic and tomatoes. I buy tomatoes in jars from an amazing company in NY (citysaucery.com) that takes in bruised heirlooms and produces some of the best products I ever had. For a winter night, in a cast iron Dutch oven, this is one of our faves. It can be made vegan. Or if not interested in a vegan version, with a little shaved parmesan and Mozzarella, or even include a sausage of your own liking. If made with sausage, we prefer a sweet Italian Chicken Sausage.

■ **SERVES 4**

■ **INGREDIENTS:**

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
4 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
1 cippolini onion, chopped
1 large zucchini, "zoodled"
½ cup coarsely chopped red, yellow
and orange bell peppers
2 tablespoons Calabrian peppers
Italian parmesan cheese, thinly shaved
(not vegan)

1 cup packed whole basil leaves
3 cups chopped cherry tomatoes
¼ cup red wine vinegar
Salt/pepper, to taste
4 grilled Italian sausages, sliced
(not vegan)
Mozzarella cheese, thinly sliced
(not vegan)

■ **INSTRUCTIONS:**

Heat olive oil in a Dutch oven until shimmering. **Add** garlic, cippolini onion, zoodled zucchini, and peppers and sauté for 1 minute. **If not preparing a vegan version, cover** this layer with thinly shaved Italian Parmesan Cheese; otherwise omit this layer. **Cover** with whole basil leaves and then the chopped cherry tomatoes and red wine vinegar.

Cover and cook for a minimum of 2 hours in a 200-degree oven. **Uncover and roast** the top layer at 325° for 20 minutes. **Turn down heat** to bake at 250° for 20 minutes.

If not preparing a vegan meal, add grilled sausage and cover with thinly sliced mozzarella.

Serve immediately. 🍴

© 2021 Mort Aaronson