

THE CULINARY Playground

Sloppy Joe Casserole

4 oz ground beef
2 T chopped onion
1/2 green bell pepper, chopped
1/2 red bell pepper, chopped
1/2 clove garlic, chopped
1/4 (14.5 ounce) can petite diced tomatoes
1/4 cup ketchup
1 teaspoon brown sugar
1/4 teaspoon yellow mustard
salt and ground black pepper to taste
2 cup cooked penne pasta
6 T shredded Colby-Jack cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).

Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook and stir beef, onion, green bell pepper, red bell pepper, and garlic in the hot skillet until beef is browned and crumbly, 5 to 7 minutes; drain and discard grease. Stir tomatoes, ketchup, brown sugar, mustard, salt, and pepper into ground beef mixture; reduce heat and simmer until heated through, about 10 minutes.

Add meat mix and cooked pasta to baking dish. Top with cheese.

Bake in the preheated oven until heated through and cheese is melted, about 20 minutes.

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Quick Pickled Zucchini Salad

Serves 4

2 cups white wine vinegar
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1 tablespoon kosher salt
2 cloves garlic, smashed
Small bundle fresh dill, tied with butcher's twine
3 large zucchini, diced
8 ounces fresh mozzarella, torn into bite-size pieces
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
Zest and juice of 1 lemon
Extra-virgin olive oil, for drizzling
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Place a saucepot over direct heat. Add the vinegar, 1 cup water, sugar, salt, garlic and dill and bring to a boil while whisking to dissolve the sugar.
2. Add the zucchini to a large bowl and pour the pickling liquid over. Let stand until the zucchini are pickled but still firm, 5 to 10 minutes. Remove the zucchini from the pickling liquid and drain slightly in a colander set over a large bowl. Discard the garlic and dill.
3. To assemble the salad: Place the pickled zucchini onto a platter. Distribute the mozzarella and tomatoes evenly over top. Zest the lemon over top and squeeze the lemon juice all over. Drizzle with olive oil. Season with salt and pepper and serve at room temperature.
4. (Alternatively, you can boil the pickling liquid over medium-high heat on a stovetop.)