



I had a (banking) customer from Providence who was of Italian descent. We used to spend a significant amount of time talking about gardening, cooking, and food in general and far less time talking about banking. He gave me a wonderful compliment one day when he said, “are you sure you aren’t Italian?” When I said that I was sure, he replied, “well you were definitely an Italian grandmother in another life”! One day when we were talking about zucchini overload, he told me about this recipe. His recipe called for pieces of pepperoni to be dropped in during the simmering - for obvious reasons I don’t do that, but I am sure it would be quite tasty. This recipe is very forgiving, adjust amounts based on what you have.

Joe’s Zucchini Stew

2 medium zucchini – about 6-8 cups chopped into wedges or pieces 1 inch thick at least
2- 28 oz can dice tomatoes (you can also use whole, just break them up with spoon during cooking)
2 ribs celery chopped
2 carrots chopped
3 cloves garlic smashed
1 large onion chopped
3 Tbl olive oil
1 green or red bell pepper chopped
2-4 cups cooked chickpeas (optional); canned are fine
fresh chopped basil and parsley about a cup total, you could add other herbs to taste
red pepper flake or 2 hot peppers whole
Salt and pepper

Heat olive oil in a soup pot. Sauté the onion till translucent, add garlic sauté a minute longer. Add the celery, carrots and bell pepper and cook till slightly soft, about 5 minutes, then add zucchini, cook another 5 minutes tossing zucchini around to slightly soften. Add cans of tomatoes so that the liquid covers zucchini and bring to a simmer-add less or more tomatoes depending on how much zucchini you have-you can also use water or vegetable broth to thin it out and cover zucchini. Add salt and pepper and the whole hot peppers, or a sprinkle or two of red pepper flakes. Simmer until zucchini is soft, pull the whole hot peppers out, add 2/3 of the herbs and the optional chickpeas while simmering. Simmer at least 30 minutes, best if eaten next day, let it sit in fridge overnight

Notes: You may use fresh tomatoes instead; I use over ripe ones, pour hot water over to remove skins if desired (sometimes I do not). Rough chop and let them break down further as stew simmers. You may like it thinner-more like a soup, add vegetable broth or water.

I add a can of chickpeas for protein and serve over brown rice with a handful of herbs on top. Non vegans may like a sprinkle of parmesan cheese.