

THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES



Summer Vegetable Gratin (from Cook's Illustrated)

6-8 servings

I didn't use this much oil. I sprayed the pan with cooking spray instead of using a tablespoon of oil, and then I used less with the garlic, maybe just 1 tablespoon instead of three.

6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 pound zucchini, ends trimmed and sliced crosswise into ¼-inch-thick slices
1 pound summer squash (yellow), ends trimmed and sliced crosswise into ¼-inch-thick slices
2 teaspoons table salt
1½ pounds ripe tomatoes (3 to 4 large), sliced ¼-inch thick
2 medium onions, halved lengthwise and sliced thin pole to pole (about 3 cups)
¾ teaspoon ground black pepper
2 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through garlic press (about 2 teaspoons)
1 tablespoon minced fresh thyme leaves
1 large slice white sandwich bread, torn into quarters
2 ounces Parmesan cheese, grated (about 1 cup)
2 medium shallots, minced (about ¼ cup)
¼ cup chopped fresh basil leaves

1. Adjust an oven rack to the upper-middle position and heat the oven to 400 degrees. Brush a 13- by 9-inch baking dish with 1 tablespoon oil; set aside.
2. Toss the zucchini and summer squash slices with 1 teaspoon salt in a large bowl; transfer to a colander set over a bowl. Let stand until the zucchini and squash release at least 3 tablespoons of liquid, about 45 minutes. Arrange the slices on a triple layer of paper towels; cover with another triple layer of paper towels. Firmly press each slice to remove as much liquid as possible.
3. Place the tomato slices in a single layer on a double layer of paper towels and sprinkle evenly with ½ teaspoon salt; let stand 30 minutes. Place a second double layer of paper towels on top of the tomatoes and press firmly to dry the tomatoes.
4. Meanwhile, heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Add the onions, remaining ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper; cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions are softened and dark golden brown, 20 to 25 minutes. Set the onions aside.
5. Combine the garlic, 3 tablespoons oil, remaining ½ teaspoon pepper, and thyme in a small bowl. In a large bowl, toss the zucchini and summer squash in half of the oil mixture, then arrange in the greased baking dish. Arrange the caramelized onions in an even layer over the squash. Slightly overlap the tomato slices in a single layer on top of the onions. Spoon the remaining garlic-oil mixture evenly over the tomatoes. Bake until the vegetables are tender and the tomatoes are starting to brown on the edges, 40 to 45 minutes.
6. Meanwhile, process the bread in a food processor until finely ground, about 10 seconds. (You should have about 1 cup crumbs.) Combine the bread crumbs, remaining tablespoon oil, Parmesan, and shallots in a medium bowl. Remove the baking dish from the oven and increase the heat to 450 degrees. Sprinkle the bread-crumbs mixture evenly on top of the tomatoes. Bake the gratin until bubbling and the cheese is lightly browned, 5 to 10 minutes. Sprinkle with the basil and let sit at room temperature for 10 minutes before serving.