

## PORK OR VEAL AND ZUCCHINI PASTA SAUCE

☞ *Sugo di Maiale o di Vitello e Zucchine*

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One might not think that the choice of pork or veal could affect the sauce too much, yet from each you will end up with distinctly different pasta dishes. If you choose pork, the cooking fat should be olive oil, and the most satisfactory pasta match for the sauce would be the firm-bodied dried, boxed factory-made pasta in a tubular shape, such as penne or small maccheroni, or a shape with nesting hollows for the sauce, such as *ruote di carro* or *conchiglie*. The finished dish should be tossed with grated Pecorino, hard sheep's milk cheese. If it were available to you, a Sardinian Fiore Sardo or a well-aged Tuscan Pecorino would be a more desirable choice than Romano.

If you choose to use veal, sauté it in butter instead of olive oil, and toss the sauce with a light-bodied homemade egg pasta, such as *tagliatelle* or *fettuccine*. The Parmesan cheese in this version can only be Parmigiano-Reggiano.

5 or 6 firm and glossy medium zucchini

5 or 6 fresh, firm plum tomatoes

4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil if using pork, 3 tablespoons butter if using veal

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup onion, chopped very fine

8 ounces ground pork or veal

Fine sea salt

Black pepper ground fresh from the mill

**YIELD:** *enough pork and zucchini sauce for 1 pound factory-made pasta, serving 4 to 6 persons OR veal and zucchini sauce for 2-egg homemade tagliatelle or fettuccine, approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  pound, serving 4 persons. (See pasta and cheese recommendations in introductory note above.)*

- 1 Soak the zucchini in a basin of cold water for about 20 minutes, then rub their skin clean under cold running water. Trim away the ends, then cut the zucchini into the thinnest strips that you can.
- 2 Use a swivel-blade vegetable peeler to skin the tomatoes. Refer, if you wish, to Tomatoes on page 80 of *The Why and How of Prepping Vegetables*. Split them, scoop away the seeds without mashing the shells, and cut them into ¼-inch dice.
- 3 Put the fat you have chosen in a 10-inch skillet with the chopped onion and turn on the heat to medium high. Cook the onion, stirring from time to time, until it becomes colored a deep gold.
- 4 Add the ground meat together with salt and several grindings of pepper. Turn the meat over with a wooden spoon, crumbling and coating it well. Cook until it is browned, then add the zucchini. Turn up the heat and cook the zucchini over lively heat, turning them over from time to time, until they become lightly browned.
- 5 Add the diced tomatoes, turning them over with the wooden spoon until coated well. Cook for about 2 minutes. If the pasta is ready, drain it, transfer it to a warm serving bowl, and toss immediately with the hot sauce.

**AHEAD-OF-TIME NOTE:** The fresh flavor of this sauce does not improve with reheating.