

## Stuffed Squash Blossoms

Oh yes we did. We made a mortadella mousse. Why? To fill these beautiful squash blossoms, of course. Nonna may not have used such a fancy filling back in the day, but she taught us the value of eating every edible part of a plant lest it go to waste. Extremely perishable, these blossoms are hard to come by. Which is why Nonna shopped in her own garden. Time to take her lead.

See Cook's Note on making use of extra filling.

### Ingredients

#### filling

1/2 cup whole milk ricotta cheese  
4 ounces pound soft goat cheese  
2 ounces chopped mortadella (about 1/2 cup)  
2½ ounces fresh mozzarella, cut in 1/4-inch dice (about 1/2 cup)  
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley  
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper  
20 squash blossoms, stamens removed and stem trimmed to 1-inch length

#### frying

Vegetable oil, enough to come up 1/2-inch in a heavy skillet  
1 cup lukewarm water  
1 cup plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
Kosher salt

#### special equipment

small food processor fitted with the metal blade  
deep-fry thermometer  
wire rack set over a rimmed baking sheet

### Directions

#### *for filling*

Place the ricotta, goat cheese and mortadella in the bowl of a small food processor. Process until smooth and mousse-like, stopping to scrape down sides of the bowl as necessary.

Transfer mixture to a bowl and stir in the mozzarella and parsley. Taste and season with salt and pepper. Spoon filling into a plastic freezer bag or piping bag.

Snip off a corner of the freezer bag to make a piping bag. Carefully open blossom petals with your fingers, making sure not to tear them. Squeeze a small amount of filling into the blossom base, just enough to fill the cup end. Gently twist the petal tips to enclose the filling. Repeat until all blossoms are filled (you may have extra filling). Set the blossoms on a parchment-lined baking sheet as they are finished. Cover loosely with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to fry.

### ***for frying***

Bring 1/2-inch oil to 375 degrees in a 10-inch heavy straight-sided skillet. Line a rimmed baking sheet with paper towels and set a wire rack on top. Place next to the stovetop.

To make a *pastella* batter, put the water in a medium bowl. Use a mesh strainer to sift the flour into the water gradually, whisking all the time. Keep adding flour until the batter is thick enough to lightly coat a spoon. You may not use all the flour.

Working in batches, hold a blossom by its petal tips and dip into the batter to coat completely. Lift, letting excess batter drip off, then gently and carefully slip it into the oil. Fry until just golden brown, turning once, 1 to 2 minutes total time. Place on the wire rack to drain and sprinkle immediately with salt. Repeat with remaining blossoms.

### **Cook's Note**

You'll probably have a bit of extra filling, depending on the size of your squash blossoms. Melt it onto warm pasta to make a cheesy, gooey sauce, or spread it on bread or crackers.

**total time:** 40 minutes

**active prep:** 40 minutes

**serves:** 4 as an appetizer

**difficulty:** *medium*