

CRISPY FRIED ZUCCHINI

I KNOW THAT THESE ARE SIMPLE, BUT LOTS OF PEOPLE SEEM TO LIKE THEM, AND QUITE A FEW PEOPLE HAD NEVER MADE THEM, SO I INCLUDED THEM HERE. THEY'RE EASY TO DO FOR A DINNER PARTY, BECAUSE YOU CAN DO EVERYTHING IN ADVANCE AND YOU ONLY HAVE TO POP THEM BACK IN THE HOT OIL AT THE END FOR A COUPLE OF MINUTES.

INGREDIENTS

1 courgette per person
milk
plain flour
salt and pepper
peanut /groundnut oil

INSTRUCTIONS

Wash, top and tail the courgettes, and then cut lengthways into slices about a quarter of an inch (just over half a centimetre) thick. Cut each slice into long pieces – again about a quarter of an inch, and then in half across the middle, so you end up with short thin chip shapes (I hope that makes sense!). You can also just cut the courgettes into slices if you prefer, again about quarter of an inch thick. Put the courgettes into a bowl and pour over some milk. You don't need to completely cover them but there needs to be enough milk so that you can turn the courgettes in the milk and they all get nicely wet.

Prepare a dish with plenty of plain flour, and add salt and pepper to flavour the flour. Heat the peanut oil in a deep wide frying pan or wok.

Take a handful of the courgette pieces, ensuring a good coating of milk, and transfer them to the flour. Toss them in the flour so that they get a fine covering, and shake off the excess. Drop them into the hot oil, and fry until crispy and brown. Remove from the pan and drain on kitchen roll. Repeat until all of the courgettes are cooked.

I prefer to do all the courgettes once, and then just before serving I tip the whole lot back in a pan of hot oil together for just a minute or two. If you keep them warm, they tend to go soggy – so better to cook them all in advance (because it's quite messy) and then you can reheat them for a couple of minutes in the hot oil just before serving.