

Zucchini Timbales

PREP AND COOK TIME: About 1 hour

NOTES: If making up to 1 day ahead, prepare through step 5; cover and chill. Let warm to room temperature and unmold.

MAKES: 6 to 8 servings

About 1½ ounces **crusty Italian**
or **French bread**

3 pounds **zucchini**

¼ to ½ cup **olive oil**

3 cloves **garlic**, peeled and minced

1½ tablespoons chopped **fresh** or 1½
teaspoons dried **oregano** leaves

About ½ teaspoon **salt**

About ¼ teaspoon **pepper**

½ cup **grated parmesan cheese**

4 **firm-ripe tomatoes** (6 oz. each)

Fresh oregano sprigs (optional),
rinsed

1. Cut bread into ½-inch chunks. In a food processor or blender, whirl into coarse crumbs; you should have ⅔ cup.
2. Rinse zucchini and trim and discard ends. Cut into ½-inch-thick rounds.
3. In a 5- to 6-quart pan over medium heat, stir bread crumbs often until golden and crisp, about 5 minutes. Pour into a bowl.
4. Add 3 tablespoons olive oil to pan and increase heat to medium-high. Stir in zucchini, garlic, chopped oregano, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until zucchini begins to soften, about 5 minutes. Uncover and stir often until zucchini is browned and soft when pressed, 7 to 10 minutes longer. Remove from heat and stir in toasted crumbs, the parmesan cheese,

and more salt and pepper to taste.

5. Generously oil six to eight ramekins (½- to ¾-cup size) with 1 tablespoon olive oil. Divide zucchini mixture evenly among ramekins and press in firmly. Let stand at room temperature at least 5 minutes or up to 4 hours (see notes).

6. Rinse and core tomatoes; cut crosswise into ¼-inch-thick slices. Arrange 3 tomato slices on each of 6 to 8 salad or dinner plates. Run a knife around inside edge of ramekins and invert zucchini timbales onto tomatoes; if necessary, hold each ramekin and plate

together and shake gently to release. If desired, garnish with oregano sprigs. Add more salt and pepper to taste. If desired, drizzle a little olive oil over tomatoes to taste.