



A Speed Bump. Not a Stop Sign



Italian Negroni

IS TIME FLYING BY or standing still? Seems it is both at once. I wake up early, and before I know it, the day has gotten away from me. Conversely, it feels like days are on hold while I wait for life to return to normal, or whatever the new normal will be. I've read more than ever before; I've straightened the detritus in my closets.

I get a food blogger's post in my email every day. He's almost maniacally upbeat as he exhorts us to try recipes he posts online. Does the man ever sleep? Who could accomplish the culinary tasks he sets forth? But it makes for fun reading, and I, of course, saved the recipes and actually tried several. He has an adventurous palate. I was shopping for ingredients I'd never heard of, much less tried.

Two days ago, his tone changed. He became contemplative. Almost morose. "Joy is in short supply these days, and patience, too." Wow! I wanted to call him to offer comfort and encouragement,

or suggest an intervention, but had no idea how to reach him. Luckily, here it is two days later and he's back on his manic track reminding us that cooking is a solace. I looked at a shopping list I'd made from some of his recipe suggestions. Ghee, sumac, turmeric, coconut milk...both sweetened and unsweetened. Okay! Welcome Back, Sam.

I have made interesting observations during this time of relative solitude. For instance, a beautiful sunset and a Negroni are the same gorgeous color. Both inspire gratitude on my part. During one of my moments of thankfulness for this observation, I decided to cultivate some new friends. It's true, I couldn't hug a human, but I could embrace a foodstuff I previously wrote off as not worthy of the time it took to make it delicious.

I decided to start off with zucchini, that fruit that's treated like a vegetable. I didn't treat it as anything but something to be grated, squeezed dry, and added to a cake that was usually too



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sweet. But I had dinner at Mark and Mary's, and he grilled long planks of zucchini until they had beautiful charred marks and were simultaneously tender and crisp. Simple, but fabulous. I started to pore through my own saved recipes to see what would fill that same bill.

I came across a dish from Abra Berens, a farmer and chef who runs Granor Farm in Three Oaks, Michigan. I've been lucky enough to have had dinner at her farm. Her recipes taste complex but are super easy to follow. The ingredients are locally grown, and can be found in our grocery aisles, and our farmer's market. I tried her method for grilling zucchini and loved it. See what you think.

A CHANGE OF PACE

When I drive to Chicago, I usually take a small side street as a shortcut to get on the highway. Evidently, many others discovered this route. The street became crowded with cars going way too fast, thus causing the city to install speed bumps. It didn't take more than one time hitting that speed bump to make me to slow down. What a revelation! For the first time, I noticed the gorgeous neighborhood and beautiful floral arrangements in the outdoor planters. I admired the architecture, for which Chicago is famous. I still got where I was going, but at a more leisurely pace.

This pandemic has caused us to hit a speed bump in our regular schedules. We don't have to stop...just slow down. We'll get there. I can't think of anything we humans can't do when we all work together on solving a problem. In the meantime, cheers to more glorious sunsets. ☺

Grilled Zucchini Planks with White Beans, Olive Oil, and Rosemary



INGREDIENTS:

- Grapeseed or other neutral oil
- 6 small cloves garlic, minced or cut into thin slices
- 3 sprigs rosemary, stemmed and minced
- Two (12 oz) cans white beans, drained and rinsed (I use cannellini beans)
- ¼ cup sherry or red wine vinegar
- ¼ cup olive oil, plus more for dressing
- 3-4 zucchini or yellow squash, cut into ½ inch planks
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 4 oz arugula

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a frying pan, heat ¼ cup oil over medium heat. Add the garlic and rosemary and cook until fragrant, but not browned. Add the beans and combine with the garlic and rosemary. Sauté briefly. Stir in the vinegar and ¼ cup olive oil and remove from heat. Set aside at room temperature.
2. Season the squash liberally with salt and pepper and grill over medium high heat until just barely tender. (You want a little resistance.)
3. Dress the arugula lightly with olive oil and a pinch of salt. Place the beans on a platter and top with the squash and arugula.

Note: As long as you have the grill heated, why not grill some chicken or a lovely piece of salmon to go along with the beans?



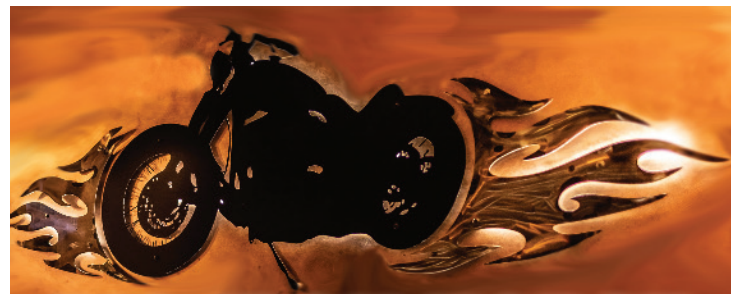
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