

Zucchini Madeleines

Madeleines are small oval cakes with a pretty shell-shape rib molded on one side. These are made from a savory muffin batter baked in the traditional rectangular French madeleine plaque pan that bakes eight cakes at one time. I have made hundreds of dozens of these appetizers for catering; they freeze beautifully and taste great at room temperature. They are also not messy and taste excellent with wine or champagne.

Makes 3 dozen

1 1/2 pounds (3 to 4) zucchini squash, shredded
1/3 cup olive oil
3 medium shallots, minced
5 eggs
2 tablespoons milk or plain yogurt
1 1/4 cups (about 4 ounces) grated Parmesan cheese
2 packed tablespoons chopped fresh basil leaves
1 cup unbleached all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon baking powder

1. Place the shredded zucchini on layers of paper towels and let drain 20 minutes. Meanwhile, place the olive oil in a skillet and sauté the shallots until limp over medium heat, about 5 minutes. Preheat the oven to 400°. Grease the madeleine pan with cooking spray and set aside.
2. Using a balloon whisk or electric mixer, combine the eggs, milk or yogurt, cheese, and basil. Add the flour and baking powder. Fold in the zucchini and shallots with all the oil until just evenly blended. Do not overmix.
3. Spoon the batter into the prepared molds two-thirds full, about 1 heaping tablespoon. Bake in the center of the preheated oven 15 to 18 minutes, or until puffy and very lightly browned. Invert onto a rack. I bake two pans at once, flip out the baked ones, regrease and refill until all the batter is used up. Serve hot or room temperature. Store in plastic bags in the refrigerator overnight or freeze up to 2 months.