

BBQ Courgette with smoked labneh and mint dressing

Takes 4 hours, serves 4 as a side dish, uses cheesecloth and a BBQ or griddle pan

INGREDIENTS

500ml natural, full fat yoghurt
0.5 teaspoon salt
Generous grind of pepper
A handful of wood chips for smoking
4 large courgettes, sliced lengthways into 3-5mm thick slithers
2 tbsp olive oil
1 small garlic clove, crushed
A pinch of salt
Small handful fresh mint leaves
3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 tbsp balsamic vinegar

DIRECTIONS

At least 4 hours before smoking the labneh or serving (if you're not smoking it), stir the salt and pepper into your yoghurt. Place your cheesecloth in a sieve over a bowl, making sure there are a few layers of cloth lining it and plenty of fabric hanging over the edge of the sieve. Pour all of the yoghurt into the cheesecloth, then gather the ends up and tie them up. Place in the fridge and leave to drain for minimum 4 hours and up to 24. If you are going to smoke it, you will also need to soak your wood chips in water for one hour before they're ready for use.

If you are going to make this with BBQ courgette, fire up the BBQ now, or heat your griddle pan over a medium heat for 5 minutes. Rub the olive oil over your courgette slices then cook them on your BBQ or griddle, turning only once, until charred on both sides and cooked through. Place the pieces in a bowl covered with cling film.

If you are going to smoke your labneh, do so once it has strained for 4 hours. Using some long tongs, move the charcoal to make some space and place a small metal tray of water underneath the grill on your BBQ. Put a few wood chips on the coals and then place the cheesecloth bundle of labneh on the grill over the water bowl, then place the lid on your BBQ with the top vents open. Try to maintain a gentle trickle of smoke from the BBQ, but don't worry about keeping the temperature too high, as we're not cooking anything, we just want some smoke. Leave for 15-20 minutes, adding more wood chips if the smoke subsides, then remove the labneh and place in a bowl and refrigerate.

To make the dressing, place the garlic clove and a pinch of salt in a pestle and mortar and grind to a rough paste. Add the mint leaves and grind further until it's all formed a paste. Add the oil and vinegar and stir together, you should have a thick, minty sauce.

Now that all your components are ready, you can compile the dish. Get a large platter and lay all of the courgette slithers on it, scrunching them up and twisting them a bit to get some height and texture. Now drop blobs of labneh all over the plate until it looks good, followed by dribbling the dressing all over it. There may be excess labneh and dressing, which should be served alongside the platter, I can guarantee the labneh will all get eaten up! Your dish is now ready to be served!

