



Middle Eastern Zucchini Soup

I love soup at any time of year - and fresh green veggie soups are perfect for spring – and so quick and easy. This is not a traditional Middle Eastern dish, just my take on zucchini soup. Cumin is one of my favourite spices and it adds a lovely fragrant earthiness, while the yoghurt and za'atar add a bit of zing. Za'atar, a blend of thyme, sumac and sesame seeds, is easy to make and also available from Middle Eastern grocers. It's quite addictive sprinkled on just about everything!

Serves 6 as a starter



INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 red onion, finely chopped
- Salt flakes, to taste
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 6 zucchini, grated
- 750ml water
- 250ml milk
- ½ cup natural yoghurt
- 1 tablespoon za'atar

METHOD

1. Heat oil in a saucepan over low heat, add onion and a good pinch of salt, cover and cook for 10–15 minutes, until very tender.
2. Add cumin and stir for 30 seconds or so, until aromatic.
3. Stir in zucchini, water, milk and about 2 teaspoons of salt flakes.
4. Increase heat and bring to the boil, reduce heat and simmer for about 20 minutes, until zucchini is tender.
5. Use a stick blender to puree until as smooth as you like; if you prefer it completely smooth you may need to simmer it for another 10 minutes or so.
6. Taste and add more salt if needed.
7. Serve into soup bowls, place a tablespoon of yoghurt in the centre of each one and swirl to break it up a little.
8. Sprinkle with za'atar and serve.