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BAKED CHICKEN AND ZUCCHINI GRATIN

SERVES 4

This satisfying dish is a great way to use two veggies that always seem overabundant in the brief days of summer—tomatoes and zucchinis.

1 egg

1 tablespoon water

¾ teaspoon salt

⅛ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 cup dry bread crumbs

4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves

4 tablespoons olive or vegetable oil

5 medium zucchinis, sliced

4 medium tomatoes, sliced

1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese

2 teaspoons minced fresh basil

1. In a shallow bowl, whisk the egg, water, ½ teaspoon of the salt, and the pepper.
2. Set aside 2 tablespoons of the bread crumbs. Place the remaining crumbs in a large ziplock bag. Dip the chicken breasts

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in the egg mixture, then place them in the bag and shake to coat evenly with the crumbs.

3. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
4. In a large skillet on medium-high heat, warm 2 tablespoons of the olive oil. When it shimmers, add the chicken breasts and cook for 2 to 3 minutes on each side, or until they turn golden brown. Remove from the heat and set aside.
5. In the same skillet, add the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil. Add the zucchini slices and sauté until they are crisp-tender; drain. Transfer to a greased 9 by 13-inch baking dish. Sprinkle the reserved breadcrumbs over the zucchini. Top with the tomato slices; sprinkle with $\frac{2}{3}$ cup of the mozzarella cheese, basil, and the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt. Top with the chicken.
6. Cover and bake for 25 minutes. Uncover, and sprinkle with the remaining $\frac{1}{3}$ cup mozzarella. Bake 10 minutes longer, or until the cheese is melted.

—Recipe by Mariquita Farm, Watsonville, California; from *Bounty from the Box: The CSA Farm Cookbook* by Mi Ae Lipe

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ABOUT ZUCCHINI

Zucchini was almost unknown in America until the mid-1900s, when Italian immigrants brought this green summer squash with them. From then on, its popularity in the United States grew nearly as quickly as the healthy plant in July.

Zucchini taste best when they're still young, tender, and small—just 2 to 8 inches long. Avoid bigger ones, which may be bitter, tough, and tasteless. Choose firm, plump specimens with unblemished skins and no bruised, shriveled, or watery areas.

Zucchini is a rather perishable vegetable; avoid washing it until just before using, and keep it wrapped in a dry paper towel inside a plastic bag in the refrigerator vegetable crisper for up to 4 days.