

## Zucchini “baba Ghanoush”

*This looks rather like a volcanic eruption, in the best possible sense. There is none of the tahini you'd associate with baba ghanoush: it's the garlic, smokiness, and texture of the mashed zucchini flesh that calls its purple friend to mind. I don't know why we don't broil zucchini more. Getting some smokiness into the naturally bland flesh is a real revelation. Served with bread, this is a delicate and delightful way to whet the appetite at the beginning of a meal.*

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Preheat the broiler. Place the zucchini on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper and broil for about 45 minutes, turning once or twice during the cooking, until the skin crisps and browns nicely. Remove from the oven and, once cool enough to handle, peel off the zucchini skin, discard it, and set the flesh aside in a colander to drain; you can also scoop out the flesh with a spoon. The zucchini can be served warm or at room temperature.

Put the yogurt in a small saucepan with the Roquefort and egg. Heat very gently for about 3 minutes, stirring often. You want the yogurt to heat through but not quite reach the simmering point. Set aside and keep warm.

Melt the butter in a small sauté pan with the pine nuts over low heat and cook, stirring often, for 3 to 4 minutes, until the nuts turn golden brown. Stir in the chile flakes and lemon juice and set aside.

To serve, put the zucchini in a bowl and add the garlic, a scant ½ teaspoon salt, and a good grind of black pepper. Gently mash everything together with a fork and then spread the mixture out on a large serving platter. Spoon the warm yogurt sauce on top, followed by a drizzle of the warm chile butter and the pine nuts. Finish with a sprinkle of za'atar and serve at once.

*See picture on the following pages*

**SERVES four**  
as a starter or as part of a  
mezze selection

5 large zucchini (about  
2¾ lb/1.2 kg)  
½ cup/80 g goat's milk  
yogurt  
½ oz/15 g Roquefort,  
coarsely grated  
1 egg, lightly beaten  
1 tbsp/15 g unsalted butter  
2½ tbsp/20 g pine nuts  
½ tsp Urfa chile flakes, or  
a pinch of regular chile  
flakes  
1 tsp lemon juice  
1 clove garlic, crushed  
½ tsp za'atar, to finish salt  
and black pepper

