

# The Curve

## EAT COURGETTES!

In cafés and simple restaurants across the UK, courgettes are frequently (mis)used to make a poor excuse of a ratatouille or the sort of unappetizing vegetable 'lasagne' only ever eaten by desperate vegetarians with no other menu choice. Courgettes (known as *zucchini* to Italians and Americans) are in fact beautifully tender vegetables with a fresh, delicate flavour. Try our recipe below and start the fight back against courgette abuse!

**HISTORY** - The origin of the courgette is not entirely clear, partly because common usage of the word courgette often relates to plants that transcend botanical classifications (see *Biology* section below). It was not widely eaten in Europe before the twentieth century and some sources claim that it was developed from the squash, first brought to Europe from the Americans during Christopher Columbus' crusades. Squash have been cultivated in Central America for more than five thousand years and courgettes play a prominent role in Mexican cuisine today.

As with the aubergine, the courgette was brought to the attention of Britons in the mid-twentieth century thanks to the writings of Elizabeth David.

**BIOLOGY** - A member of the *cucurbit* family, courgettes are related to watermelons, gherkins and cucumbers. Courgettes are usually marrows harvested at a young age, although the mature fruit of certain varieties of squash may also be sold as courgettes.

**NUTRITION** - Courgettes have a high water content and are low in calories. They are a source of folate, potassium, and vitamins A and C.

### TIPS:

**BUYING** - Smaller, younger courgettes have more flavour. Look for firm, heavy-feeling courgettes with unblemished bright and glossy skins.

**COOKING** - Scan the QR code below with your smartphone to view and download the recipe for 'Courgettes, Mange tout and Lemon'.

