

Panelle with zucchini and corn salsa



One of the hors d'oeuvres served at a recent Golden Circle event featuring Mario Batali were these panelle, or Sicilian fritters, included in his book, [America: Farm to Table](#). In the book, Batali says, "I love panelle in any form, but perhaps my faves are served in carts in the Vucciria market in Palermo. The addition of corn and zucchini as a salsa would seem superfluous to a true Siciliana, but makes a lot of sense to me." This fresh take on this popular street food serves 4.

Ingredients

For the salsa

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 ears corn, husked, kernels cut from cobs
1 medium zucchini, cut into ¼-inch dice
4 plum tomatoes, cut into ¼-inch dice, with juices and seeds
½ red onion, cut into ⅛-inch dice
2 jalapeños, stemmed, seeded and finely chopped
2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint leaves
3 scallions, thinly sliced
Zest and juice of 1 lime
1 teaspoon ground cumin
Kosher salt

For the panelle

1 cup chickpea flour
1 teaspoon kosher salt

3 cups cold water

1 bunch fresh flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup), plus more for garnish, if desired

1 quart extra-virgin olive oil, for frying (you may use less than this amount, but have it ready)

Method

Make the corn salsa

In a cast-iron skillet, heat the olive oil until smoking. Toss in the corn and the zucchini and do not move it for 2 minutes—be patient. After 2 minutes, shake the pan twice to move the vegetables and continue to cook for 2 minutes more. The corn and zucchini should have a nice char on a couple of sides. Dump the mixture into a medium bowl. Add the rest of the salsa ingredients and mix gently. Set aside.

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Make the panelle

In a 4- to 6-quart saucepan, dissolve the chickpea flour and salt in the water.

Cook over medium-high heat, stirring continuously, until the mixture has the consistency of cream of wheat, about 20 minutes. Stir in the parsley and spread the mixture onto a baking sheet, flattening it to a thickness of about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, and allow to cool. Using a biscuit or cookie cutter, cut into 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch rounds and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Heat 2 inches of cooking oil in a high-sided frying pan to 375°F. Fry the chickpea disks, 4 or 5 at a time, until golden brown, 30 to 45 seconds. Carefully remove them from the oil using a spider or a slotted spatula (tongs will tear them), and drain on paper towels.

Serve the panelle hot. Season the salsa with salt and serve on the side, or spoon over the top of each panella, and sprinkle with parsley—or not.

Recipe courtesy of **America: Farm To Table** (Grand Central Life & Style, 2014).