

Eggplant Caponata

From the blog For Love of the Table

1 1/2 to 1 3/4 lbs. Eggplant, trimmed and cut in a 1/2-inch dice (about 6 to 7 cups)
2 c. diced (1/4-inch) red onion (300 g.)
1 c. diced (1/4-inch) celery (125 g.)
6 T. (plus more as needed) olive oil
15 oz. vine ripened tomatoes, peeled, seeded and juices reserved
2 fat cloves garlic, peeled and minced
1/4 t. hot pepper flakes
3 T. (30 g.) capers, rinsed
3/4 c. (85 g.) Sicilian green olives, coarsely chopped
1 T. red wine vinegar (more as needed)
1 1/2 to 2 t. honey
Salt & pepper to taste
Chopped Italian Parsley, Mint or Basil to serve

Place the eggplant in a large bowl, season with salt & pepper and drizzle with 3 T. olive oil. Toss to coat well, adding more oil if necessary. Spread on a rimmed baking sheet (half sheet pan) that has been sprayed with pan spray. Make sure the eggplant is in a snug single layer. Place in a 450° to 475° oven and roast until tender and golden—about 25 to 30 minutes. Turn the eggplant over—using a pancake turner or other wide spatula—after it has been in the oven about 20 minutes. Set aside.

Meanwhile, warm the remaining 3 T. of olive oil in a wide sauté pan set over moderate heat. Add the onion and celery along with a good pinch of salt and cook until tender (the celery will still have texture, but it shouldn't be crunchy) and beginning to caramelize—about 20 to 25 minutes.

While the vegetables cook, purée the tomatoes (along with their juices) until smooth.

When the onion and celery are tender and caramelized, add the garlic and pepper flakes and cook until fragrant. Add the tomato purée, increase the heat, and simmer until the tomato sauce is very thick (it should not be soupy). Add the olives, capers, vinegar and honey and bring back to a simmer. Fold in the roasted eggplant. Smooth the caponata out into an even layer and let simmer very gently for five minutes or so to allow the flavors to blend (if it seems very dry, drizzle some hot water in around the edges. Taste, correct the seasoning with salt and the sweet/sour balance with honey and vinegar.

Let cool to room temperature. Serve as a side...or a spread for crostini...sprinkled with parsley, basil or mint.

Serves 6 as a side dish and 8 to 12 as an appetizer.

Notes: If you don't have vine ripened tomatoes...or don't want to peel and seed any...simply whisk a 1 1/2 T. of double concentrated tomato paste into a cup of water and add as you would the tomato purée.

<http://www.forloveofthetable.com/2017/08/eggplant-caponata.html>

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