

Caponata

Todd L McCagg treatment of a Sicilian favorite.

Prep: 20 min.

Cook: 30 min.

Ingredients

6 tablespoons olive oil (I use Extra Virgin)
1 large eggplant, cut into 1/2-inch pieces (6 cups)
1 large onion, chopped (1 cup)
2 stalks celery, chopped (1 cup)
2-3 large cloves garlic, minced
1/4 cup red wine vinegar (I prefer Balsamic)
1 tsp sugar (I omit the sugar as the Balsamic has a sweet taste)
1/2 teaspoon salt*
1/2 teaspoon pepper (I also give it a shot of crushed red pepper flakes for fun)
2-3 Roma tomatoes, seeded and chopped, or 1 14-1/2-ounce can diced tomatoes drained
(I used the canned and I do drain them)
1/3 cup chopped pitted green olives
3 Tbs capers, drained
1/4 cup pine nuts, toasted (I am too lazy to toast them)

Directions

1. In large skillet (I find that a wok works best and holds everything with no problem), heat 2 tablespoons of the olive oil over medium heat. Add 1/2 of the eggplant; cook and stir 5 to 6 minutes or until starting to brown. Remove from skillet to large bowl. Repeat with remaining eggplant and remove to bowl with the rest of the eggplant
2. Add remaining olive oil to skillet; cook onion and celery in hot oil about 5 minutes or just until tender. Once the onion and celery begin to wilt, add the garlic (do not “toast” the garlic).
3. Add to the skillet the vinegar, sugar, salt, and pepper. Add eggplant, tomatoes, olives, capers, and pine nuts. Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Cover and simmer about 5 minutes or until vegetables are tender and sauce is thickened. (Some folks cook it longer, in my opinion for too long, I just heat until boiling and then a couple of minutes more to warm through).

Serve as an antipasto with sliced Italian bread or chilled as a side dish with meat and poultry. It is also great over pasta (add a couple of Tbs of additional olive oil if you are using it on pasta)

Makes 10 to 12 servings. (HA! Or 2-3 Liz/Todd/Louise sized servings)