



Eggplant Caponata

Makes 6–8 servings as a side dish; 12+ when served on crackers ~ \$9.30

(Per serving: \$1.16 for side dish, \$0.77 as appetizer)

Caponata, a Sicilian version of the traditional French ratatouille, is best served warm or at room temperature. (Its flavor improves on day two.) It's great as a snack, on crackers/celery, as a tasty sandwich spread or a side dish for dinner.

Ingredients

- 1 medium eggplant (12-16 oz), cut into 1/2" dice
- Extra virgin olive oil (approx. 4 Tbsp., divided)
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 1 medium red onion, cut into 1/4" dice
- Pinch of crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 ribs of celery, cut into 1/4" dice
- 4 cloves of garlic, thinly sliced
- 1 red and 1 yellow pepper, seeded and cut into 1/4" dice
- 1/3 cup water
- 1/3 cup tomato paste
- 1 Tbsp. agave syrup or sugar
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup golden raisins (dark raisins okay)
- 1/4 cup capers or chopped, pitted green olives (optional)

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. In a large bowl, toss eggplant pieces generously with olive oil and salt to taste. Spread on baking sheet and roast until eggplant is soft and slightly browned – about 15 minutes. Set aside to cool.
3. Coat a wide, deep pot with olive oil. Over medium heat, sauté onion and crushed red pepper until onion is soft. Add celery, garlic and peppers and continue cooking until all the vegetables are soft and the mixture is aromatic – about 6 minutes. Toss in eggplant, tomato paste and water. Cook until water has evaporated; stir in agave/sugar and vinegar. (At this point if you want a smoother texture, cool the mixture slightly and then run briefly through a food processor.) Stir in raisins (and capers or olives if you choose).
4. Let mixture cool completely. Serve as a side or on crackers, cheese coins, or bruschetta. It also makes a good sandwich spread. This mixture is best made a day ahead to let the flavors blend.

Recipe courtesy of Mary Pat Butler

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