

Sicilian-style Sweet and Savory Eggplant Relish (Caponata)



Ingredients:

Olive oil and neutral vegetable oil

4 C 1/2 inch Eggplant, about 2 small-medium globe eggplants (sliced vertically, cut into strips and diced)

1/2 C diced Onions

1 C 1/2 inch diced Celery (about 3 stalks, use the leaves!)

2 each Roma Tomatoes, cut into small dice

2 T Basil, cut into thin ribbons (can substitute parsley)

1/3 C pitted green Olives, roughly chopped

2 T Capers

2 T golden Raisins

1/2 tsp Sugar

1 T red wine or apple cider Vinegar

Red chili flakes (optional)

Salt and ground black pepper

Method:

Heat a medium sized skillet / fry pan (preferably non-stick) until hot. Add 2 T combined mix of olive oil and neutral vegetable oil. When the oil is hot, add the eggplant to the pan; you will hear a sizzle, let the eggplant brown on one side for about 2-3 minutes without stirring. Season with salt and black pepper and gently toss or turn the eggplant with a fire-resistant spatula. Brown for another 2-3 minutes without stirring. Remove pan from heat and place the eggplant in a bowl.

Wipe out the pan and heat again over low heat with 1 T of neutral and olive oil mix. When the oil is hot, add the onions and sweat over low heat. When the onions are soft but not yet translucent or browned, add the celery and season with salt and black pepper. Continue to cook, stirring gently until the vegetables are cooked through to your liking. Add the eggplant back into the pan and stir together. Add the diced tomatoes and chili flakes if using and cook for 2-3 minutes. Add the capers, chopped olives, raisins, sugar, and vinegar and stir together. Sprinkle the basil in and cook for another 2-3 minutes. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt, pepper and vinegar.

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Serve hot, warm or at room temperature as a side dish. Can also be spread on baguette slices or on crostini (slice baguettes, ¼ inch thick, brush with olive oil and toasted in 325-degree oven on a cookie / sheet pan for 2-3 minutes on each side (crostini))