

Ratatouille

INGREDIENTS

- 2 1/2 lb tomatoes (4 large)
- 8 large garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 20 fresh basil leaves, torn in half
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 lb eggplant, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2 1/4 teaspoons salt
- 2 large onions (1 1/2 lb total), quartered lengthwise and thinly sliced crosswise
- 3 assorted bell peppers (green, red, and/or yellow; 1 1/2 lb total), cut into 1-inch pieces
- 4 medium zucchini (2 lb), quartered lengthwise and cut crosswise into 3/4-inch-thick pieces
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper

PREPARATION

- Garnish: Parmigiano-Reggiano shavings and fresh basil
- Cut an X in bottom of each tomato with a sharp paring knife and blanch together in a 4-quart pot of boiling water 1 minute. Transfer tomatoes with a slotted spoon to a cutting board and, when cool enough to handle, peel off skin, beginning from scored end, with paring knife.
- Coarsely chop tomatoes and transfer to a 5-quart heavy pot with garlic, parsley, basil, and 1/3 cup oil. Simmer, partially covered, stirring occasionally, until tomatoes break down and sauce is slightly thickened, about 30 minutes.
- While sauce is simmering, toss eggplant with 1/2 teaspoon salt in a large colander and let stand in sink 30 minutes.
- Meanwhile, cook onions in 3 tablespoons oil with 1/4 teaspoon salt in a 12-inch heavy skillet over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until softened, 10 to 12 minutes. Transfer onions with a slotted spoon to a large bowl, then add 3 tablespoons oil to skillet and cook bell peppers with 1/4 teaspoon salt over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 10 minutes. Transfer peppers with slotted spoon to bowl with onions. Add 3 tablespoons oil to skillet and cook zucchini with 1/4 teaspoon salt over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until just tender, 6 to 8 minutes. Transfer zucchini with slotted spoon to bowl with other vegetables.
- While zucchini are cooking, pat eggplant dry with paper towels. Add remaining oil (about 1/4 cup) to skillet and cook eggplant over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until softened, 10 to 12 minutes.
- Add vegetables, remaining teaspoon salt, and black pepper to tomato sauce and simmer, covered, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are very tender, about 1 hour. Cool, uncovered, and serve warm or at room temperature.
- Cooks' note: ·Stew can be made 2 days ahead and chilled, covered. Bring to room temperature or reheat before serving.