



Mediterranean Ratatouille

3 Tablespoons olive oil
2 medium onion, peeled; diced
1 red pepper, sliced, chopped
1 green pepper, sliced, chopped
3 small zucchini, cut into ½ inch slices
1 medium eggplant, cut in ½ inch slices
3 garlic cloves, peeled; minced
8 plum tomatoes, halved
1 Tablespoon chopped fresh thyme
2 Tablespoons chopped fresh oregano
1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
Salt and black pepper to taste

In a large pot, heat the oil, then sauté the diced onions until they give up their moisture. Do not brown. Add sliced peppers and toss gently. Cover; cook on low heat for 3 minutes.

Add the zucchini, eggplant, and garlic to the onions and peppers; toss gently. Cover; cook for 10 minutes over low heat. Stir in the tomatoes and herbs, and season with salt and black pepper to taste. Cover once again;

cook until the tomatoes are softened, about 10 minutes. Toss gently; serve immediately. Serves: 6

Recipe from: *Cooking with the Seasons* by Monique Jamet Hooker, Bounty Press: 2008, p. 157.

Variations: Monique suggestions include:

- Drain excess liquid from ratatouille to make or add to another soup broth.
- Use the drained vegetables to make a delicious omelet filling.
- Spread vegetables over a pizza crust; top with mozzarella cheese; bake in preheated 350 degree F oven until bubbly.
- Puree ratatouille to make a summer soup, adding chicken stock if necessary.
- Use vegetables to make a wrap or pita sandwich

Alternate cooking method: Combine in Dutch Oven pot; bake at 325 degrees F for 20 to 30 minutes.

Monique's Recipe Secrets: True ratatouille recipes do not add extra liquid. They allow the vegetables to achieve flavor from their own juices. It is important to heat and cook the vegetables slowly over a low flame to allow the vegetables time to sweat their own juices. The secret to good ratatouille is to balance the flavors and amounts so that no one vegetable takes over the dish. Each bite should be a concert of taste and texture, allowing vegetables to blend equally.

Cook's Note: After cooking the tomatoes for 10 minutes, I removed tomatoes and easily peeled off the skin; then chopped them into smaller chunks and returned them to the saucepan.

About the Recipe: Late summer, when the vegetables burst with flavor, is the perfect time to make this dish. It's easy to prepare and captures the wonderful comforting flavors of summer. You could easily add some yellow squash and add some fresh basil. It's a real "farm to table" dish.