



Sicilian Eggplant Caponata

2 pounds of long black eggplant, medium dice
Coarse sea salt
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil, divided
1 cup celery, small dice
1/2 cup yellow onion, diced
2 cloves garlic cloves, sliced
1 cup Italian tomato passatto (pureed tomatoes)
1/2 cup red wine vinegar
6 Tablespoons sugar
1 cup green olives packed in brine, pitted (preferably Nocellara del Belice olives)
1/2 cup salted capers, rinsed (preferably capers from Pantelleria)
1/2 cup pine nuts, toasted
1/4 cup almonds, toasted and rough chop
2 Tablespoons dried currants
Sea salt; Ground black pepper as desired
1 cup loosely packed fresh basil leaves

In a large colander, toss the eggplant with 1 tablespoon of sea salt, set aside for 30 minutes (the salt draws out some of the bitter water from the eggplant). Lightly toss the eggplant to help drain the water.

In a large sauce pan or sauté pan, heat ¼ cup of olive oil over medium high heat. Add the diced eggplant to the hot sauté pan, stir and fry until a light golden brown, add a little more olive oil if the pan becomes dry. Remove fried golden eggplant to a small bowl.

Place the pan back on the heat; add the remaining ¼ cup of olive oil over medium heat. Add the celery, onion, and garlic to the pan, sweat until translucent. Increase the heat to high, add the tomato passatto, fry the tomato in the olive oil and reduce heat to low. Once the tomato mixture is thickened, add the vinegar, sugar and cooked eggplant. Over low heat stir in remaining ingredients except the basil leaves, cook for 10 minutes and season with a pinch of sea salt and fresh cracked pepper.

Remove from heat, transfer into a glass serving dish, add fresh basil leaves
Serves 6-8 very large servings

Recipe by: Chef Sarah Grueneberg

“Caponata gets better the next day so make ahead time! Chef loves to have Caponata as an appetizer with crusty bread and with grilled seafood and meat. I particularly like Caponata with grilled swordfish and lamb.”

For More Information See:

<https://www.hollandamerica.com/blog/topics/food-beverage/recipe-sicilian-eggplant-caponata-by-guest-chef-sarah-grueneberg/>

Cook’s Note: If you only want a small amount of relish, prepare half of the recipe. We served, it on crusty slices of artisan bread with fresh mozzarella cheese.

About the Recipe: This make-ahead recipe combines lots of ingredients that blend their flavors in the refrigerator. It is a good recipe to use for a large party or add to your appetizer tray.