

Caponata (NYT) (vegan)

Serves 6-8

Serve room temperature



- 675 g eggplant, roasted (about 7 Japanese eggplants)
- 2 T olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, from the inner, tender stalks (the heart), diced
- 3 large garlic cloves, minced
- 2 red bell peppers, diced
- Salt to taste
- 450 g ripe tomatoes, peeled, seeded and finely chopped, or 1 400-g can crushed tomatoes (in puree)
- 3 heaped T capers, rinsed and drained
- 3 T coarsely chopped pitted green olives
- 2 T plus a pinch of sugar
- 3 T red or white wine vinegar or sherry vinegar (more to taste)
- Freshly ground pepper to taste
- Pine nuts, roasted

1. Roast the **eggplant**, allow to cool and chop coarsely.
(or sauté chopped eggplant with garlic and onions and pine nuts, even raisins and brown a little)
2. Heat **1 T of the oil** over **medium heat** in a large, heavy nonstick skillet and add the **onion** and **celery**. Cook, stirring, until the onion softens, **about 5 minutes**, and add the **garlic**. Cook together for a minute, until the garlic begins to smell fragrant
3. Add the **peppers** and **½ tsp of salt**. Cook, stirring, until just about tender, **about 8 minutes**.
4. Add **another T of oil** and the **eggplant**, and stir together for **another 5 minutes**, until the vegetables are tender. The eggplant will fall apart, which is fine. Season to taste.
5. Add the **tomatoes** to the pan with about **½ tsp salt** and a pinch of **sugar**. Cook, stirring and scraping the bottom of the pan often, for **5 to 10 minutes**, until the tomatoes have cooked down somewhat and they smell fragrant.
6. Add the **capers**, **olives**, remaining **sugar**, and **vinegar**. Turn the **heat to medium-low** and cook, stirring often, for **20 to 30 minutes**, until the vegetables are thoroughly tender and the mixture is quite thick, sweet, and fragrant. Season to taste with **salt** and **pepper** and remove from the heat.
7. Allow to **cool to room temperature**. If possible, cover and chill overnight. Serve at room temperature.