

July 2021

FOOD FOR THOUGHT —It's July and that means all the goodness that summer offers us in produce is readily available! So, I give you the ever delicious & simple...Ratatouille! This is the perfect recipe for someone with fresh ripe veggies from the market or from your own garden (even better). Not a fancy meal in nature, as it was considered peasant food for its simplicity, but the nutritional value of a meal like this supersedes its meager ingredients (due to all the phytonutrients, antioxidants & high quality fats) and many fancy high-end restaurants offer this seasonal delicacy at a high price but now you can make at home and enjoy with pasta, rice, ciabatta bread or even sausage!

This Month's Recipe:
SUMMER'S BOUNTY RATATOUILLE
(Serves 8)

Ingredients:

- 1 large (1.25 lb.) eggplant, cut into 1/3-inch cubes
- Salt
- 6 tablespoons avocado oil
- 2 medium zucchini (about 1 lb.), cut into 1/3-inch cubes
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped
- 1 red, orange or yellow bell pepper, cut into 1/4-inch dice
- 5 large cloves garlic, chopped
- 6 large vine-ripened tomatoes (2 lbs.) cut into 1/3-inch cubes, with their juices
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 2 teaspoons fresh chopped thyme, plus more for serving
- 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (optional)
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh basil



Directions:

Heat 3 tablespoons of oil in a large nonstick pan over medium heat. Add the eggplant and season with 1/4 teaspoon salt. Cook, stirring frequently, until soft and starting to brown, 10 to 12 minutes. Transfer to a plate and set aside.

Add another tablespoon of oil to the pan (no need to clean it). Add the zucchini and cook, stirring frequently, until tender-crisp, 3 to 4 minutes. Season with 1/4 teaspoon salt and transfer to a plate; set aside.

Add two more tablespoons of oil to the pan and add the onion and bell pepper. Cook, stirring frequently, for about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and continue cooking for about 3 minutes more. Do not brown. Add the tomatoes and their juices, tomato paste, thyme, crushed red pepper flakes (if using) and 3/4 teaspoon salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the tomatoes are broken down into a sauce, 8 to 10 minutes. Add the cooked eggplant to the pan; bring to a gentle boil, then reduce the heat to low, and simmer, uncovered, for about 10 minutes or until the eggplant is soft. Add the zucchini and cook for 1 to 2 minutes more, or until just warmed through. Taste and adjust seasoning, if necessary. Sprinkle with fresh basil and thyme and serve warm or chilled. Leftovers can be stored in the refrigerator in an airtight container for up to 6 days.

From "Once Upon A Chef"

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