

Andrew's Chunky Ratatouille (~6 to 8 servings)

Ingredients

- 2 medium onions or leeks, small dice
- 2 medium eggplants, peeled and cut into ~1.5 cm dice
- 2 medium zucchini, cut into ~1 cm dice
- 2 small red peppers, cut into ~1 cm squares
- 500 cc container cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 cup pitted black olives, rough chopped
- 2 cloves mashed garlic (optional)
- 2 tbsps olive oil
- 1 tsp herbs (oregano, basil, marjoram or herbes de provence)
- Salt and pepper
- Lemon juice (optional)

Method

1. Toss cubed eggplant with $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp of salt. Line a large plate with 2 to 3 layers plain paper towel (not coloured). Spread eggplant evenly over the lined plate. Microwave until the eggplant is dry and shrivelled to ~1/2 size, but not overly brown. This could take 15 minutes, redistribute the eggplant every few minutes. The eggplant should be firm, not falling apart. (Cooks Illustrated, - The Science of Good Cooking). Reserve eggplant.
2. Heat oil and add onion/leek. Season with herbs, salt and pepper, and cook over low to medium heat to soften well, but not brown - ~10 minutes.
3. Add olives and (optional) garlic, stir and cook for a minute or two to ensure garlic is well mixed and cooked.
4. Stir in peppers and cook for a few minutes to soften a bit.
5. Stir in eggplant, tomatoes and zucchini, season with salt and pepper, and cook for a few minutes to soften zucchini.
6. Once you have the desired degree of firmness, check salt and pepper, brighten flavour with lemon juice (optional) and serve.

Notes

- You can choose your herbs and the addition of garlic to complement the main dish – e.g. oregano for greek, herbes de provence for south of France, etc.
- The amounts and sizes of the chopped vegetables can be adjusted to your preference.
- The cooking times for each vegetable can be adjusted to achieve desired firmness by adding at different times.