

CAPONATA

(Sweet and Sour Eggplant)

INGREDIENTS:

Servings: 2 people

Eggplant	200 g
Olive oil	3 tbs
Celery stalks	2
Small onion	1
Large ripe tomato	1
or canned plum tomatoes	100 g
Salt and freshly ground pepper	to taste
Large green olives	5
Large black olives	5
Sugar	2 tsp
Red-wine vinegar	3 tbs
Capers	1 tsp
Vegetable oil	for frying

Servings: 4 people

Eggplant	400 g
Olive oil	6 tbs
Celery stalks	4
Onion	1
Large ripe tomatoes	2
or canned plum tomatoes	230 g
Salt and freshly ground pepper	to taste
Large green olives	10
Large black olives	10
Sugar	4 tsp
Red-wine vinegar	6 tbs
Capers	2 tsp
Vegetable oil	for frying

Servings: 6 people

Eggplants	600 g
Olive oil	8 tbs
Celery stalks	6
Large onion	1
Large ripe tomatoes	3
or canned plum tomatoes	340 g
Salt and freshly ground pepper	to taste
Large green olives	12
Large black olives	12
Sugar	6 tsp
Red-wine vinegar	8 tbs
Capers	3 tsp
Vegetable oil	for frying

Servings: 8 people

Eggplants	800 g
Olive oil	175 ml
Celery stalks	8
Small onions	2
Large ripe tomatoes or canned plum tomatoes	4 450 g
Salt and freshly ground pepper	to taste
Large green olives	20
Large black olives	20
Sugar	8 tsp
Red-wine vinegar	175 ml
Capers	4 tsp
Vegetable oil	for frying

Servings: 10 people

Eggplant	1 kg
Olive oil	200 ml
Celery stalks	10
Small onions	3
Large ripe tomatoes or canned plum tomatoes	5 570 g
Salt and freshly ground pepper	to taste
Large green olives	30
Large black olives	30
Sugar	3 tbs
Red-wine vinegar	200 ml
Capers	5 tsp
Vegetable oil	for frying

Servings: 12 people

Eggplants	1.2 kg
Olive oil	250 ml
Celery stalks	12
Large onions	2
Large ripe tomatoes or canned plum tomatoes	6 700 g
Salt and freshly ground pepper	to taste
Large green olives	24
Large black olives	24
Sugar	4 tbs
Red-wine vinegar	250 ml
Capers	6 tsp
Vegetable oil	for frying

TOOLS:

Chef's knife
Colander
Olive pitter
Cutting board
Paper towels
Skillets
Slotted spoon
Wooden spoon
Saucepan

PREPARATION:

Cube the eggplant into large pieces. Sprinkle them with salt and place in a colander to drain. Leave them for 30 minutes.

In the meantime, chop the celery and peel and *dice the onion*. Pit and slice the olives. Rinse the eggplant and squeeze to remove any excess liquid; dry on paper towels.

Heat enough vegetable oil, over medium-high heat, to reach 1.5 cm up the sides of a heavy skillet. When the oil is quite hot, pour some of the eggplant into the skillet and fry, stirring, until soft and brown. Remove with a slotted spoon onto paper towels. Repeat until all the eggplant is fried. Fry the celery until tender.

Blanch, peel, seed, and *dice the tomatoes*. In another large skillet, heat in the olive oil over moderate heat. Sauté the onion for 5 minutes and then add the tomatoes. Season, to taste, with salt and pepper. Simmer over low heat for 15 minutes, stirring frequently.

Heat the sugar and vinegar in a small pan over low heat. Add the capers and olives to the sugar/vinegar mixture and cook for 10 minutes. Stir this mixture into the tomatoes and then mix in the celery and eggplant. Cook for 5 minutes. Turn off the heat. Transfer to a serving dish, sprinkle the top with parsley and serve warm or at room temperature.