

Ratatouille - A Mediterranean style vegetable stew

Mostly appropriate for late summer / autumn cooking

4-5 servings

Preparation time: about 45mins

Ingredients:

3 tablespoons of olive oil
4 medium garlic cloves (crushed or finely chopped)
2 cups of chopped onion
1 bay leaf
1 medium eggplant (18-20cm long and 10 -12 cm in diameter), cubed
1 ½ teaspoons of salt
1 ½ teaspoons of dried basil or 2 tablespoons of fresh basil.
1 teaspoon of dried marjoram or oregano or 3 teaspoons of fresh.
½ teaspoon of dried rosemary or 1 ½ teaspoons of fresh
½ teaspoon of dried thyme or 1 ½ teaspoons of fresh
1 medium zucchini (15-18cm long), cubed
2 medium capsicums, in strips
Fresh black pepper
4-6 whole ripe tomatoes (about 400-500gm), chopped. If preferred, they could also be skinned
Parsley and/or minced olives for garnishing

Rules of thumb that can be used for fresh food cooking:

1. Fresh herbs : Dried herbs are a ratio of 3:1
2. Substituting canned tomatoes for fresh is 400gm canned: 400-500gm fresh

Method:

1. Heat the olive oil in a deep skillet/frying pan. Add the garlic, onion and bay leaf and sauté over medium heat for about 5 minutes.
2. Add the eggplant, salt and herbs and stir. Cover and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally for 15-20 minutes or until the eggplant is soft.
3. Add the zucchini, capsicum, black pepper and tomatoes. Cover and simmer for about 10 more minutes or until the zucchini and capsicum are soft.
4. Serve over soft polenta, rice or cous cous while hot, warm or room temperature. It can be garnished with parsley and/or olives and if feeling decadent, a sprinkling of feta or goat cheese.

