

Ratatouille

These are guidelines only; add more of what you like best, less of the rest. It's a delicious dish to make at the end of summer, when the vegetables are at their peak flavor.

About ½ cup olive oil

1 large sweet onion

1 large or 2 skinny eggplant

2 zucchini, maybe a small pattypan squash too

3 peppers, green or red

1 cup fresh mushrooms

2 or 3 large cloves of garlic

6 tomatoes, peeled

(drop into boiling water until skins crack, remove and drop into ice water)

Prepare all the vegetables; peel the eggplant and tomatoes, cut everything into serving sized chunks. Heat a large frypan, wok or sauté pan and add a couple tablespoons oil. Sauté each vegetable until just soft, then place into a large pot. Salt and pepper each batch lightly as it is being sautéed. Add more oil for the next vegetable, and proceed in order. Mushrooms and garlic may be done together – sauté until mushrooms start releasing their juices, then add garlic, stir and cook briefly only until garlic is fragrant. Add tomatoes directly to the pot, cover and simmer gently for about 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. In the last couple of minutes add 5 or 6 big basil leaves, chopped and perhaps some chopped parsley leaves. Serve with some good crusty bread for dipping into the sauce. The flavor is even better when made a day ahead, refrigerated and reheated gently.