RATATOUILLE

yields 25 portions

INGREDIENTS

1 cup olive oil
2 large onions, peeled and thinly sliced
6 large cloves of garlic, peeled and grated
4 eggplants (medium to small size), unpeeled and cut into ½ inch cubes
5 assorted bell peppers, stemmed, seeded and cut into ½ inch dice
3 zucchini, diced into 1 inch cubes
1 teaspoon kosher salt
4 large ripe tomatoes, coarsely chopped or 4 cups good quality canned tomatoes
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
1 stalk fresh thyme (or 1 tsp dried)
2 stalks fresh basil (or 3 tbsp dried)
freshly ground pepper

This classic French vegetable stew is a wonderful meal when made with the beautiful produce found at the farmer’s market in the early autumn months. It’s delicious over pasta or tucked into an omelet. My family enjoys it best when it’s served over soft creamy polenta. This is a great recipe to double and freeze a bit for a future quick meal.

METHOD

Heat the oil in a large heavy bottomed saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic, and sauté until they begin to brown and smell delicious.

Raise the heat to medium high and then add the eggplant. Let the eggplant cook for 5 -10 minutes before adding the peppers. Allow the peppers to cook for 5 minutes and then add the zucchini.

Stir in the salt and sauté over medium-high heat until the vegetables have softened and cooked down, about 10 minutes. (This can also be done in the oven at 400°, on a sheet pan or large roasting pan. Use the same order of adding the vegetables.)

Stir in the tomatoes, vinegar and thyme. Bring to a gentle simmer over medium heat. Reduce the heat and allow it to cook, partially covered until all the vegetables are very tender and the sauce has slightly thickened, about 45 minutes. Stir in the basil and season with black pepper.