
Classic Ratatouille

Ingredients

8-10 tbsp olive oil
2 yellow onions, chopped
3-4 zucchini, sliced into 1/4-inch thick slices
1 large eggplant, sliced into 1/4-inch thick chunks
5 large tomatoes, chopped
1 green bell pepper, seeded and coarsely chopped
1 red bell pepper, seeded and coarsely chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
Salt and freshly-ground black pepper, to taste

Directions

Heat 5 or 6 tablespoons of the olive oil in a large heavy-bottomed skillet over medium heat, add the onions, and sauté about 1 minute, until fragrant and softened. Add zucchini and eggplant and sauté about 2 minutes, until lightly browned. Add more olive oil as needed if the pan looks dry. Add tomatoes, peppers, and garlic, stirring to combine. Cover, reduce heat to low, and simmer about 20 minutes, until veggies are cooked through. Take off the lid, increase heat to high, and cook for 2 or 3 minutes to evaporate excess liquid, stirring constantly. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and stir well. Serve hot, or allow to cool and add a little olive oil before serving. Serves 6.

Adapted from www.care2.com/greenliving

Nutritional Value of Select Ingredients

Zucchini – As they are 95% water, zucchini are an excellent 'diet' food. They have anti-cancer properties, and are particularly beneficial in the summer months because of their high water content (prevents dehydration) and carotenes (to protect against damaging effects of the sun). They are also a good source of vitamin C, manganese, phytonutrients, and fibre.

Peppers – Bell peppers are one of the most nutrient-dense foods available. It is beneficial for preventing cataracts, preventing blood clots, and reducing the risk of heart attacks. They are very high in vitamin C, beta-carotene, and many phytonutrients.

Tomatoes – A low calorie food packed with nutrition, tomatoes are high in vitamin C, carotenes including lycopene, and fibre. Lycopene has been shown to protect against many cancers, especially prostate. A word of warning – may cause reactions with those with allergies and auto-immune conditions, like arthritis.

Garlic – Garlic is touted as a "cure-all" due to its many uses in medicine. It has a beneficial effect on heart disease, cancer, and infectious diseases. It decreases cholesterol levels, detoxifies the body, stimulates the immune system, and the list goes on and on. Eat garlic raw and regularly for maximum benefits.

Olive Oil – Cold pressed extra virgin olive oil is an excellent source of monounsaturated fatty acids, making this oil quite stable for medium temperature cooking. It has a good variety of vitamins and minerals, and can help lower LDL cholesterol, control blood pressure, and aid in diabetes.