

Melenzana Ali Olio

Savannah · 29/09/2024



*Melenzana & Sweet Red Bell Pepper
w/ Fresh Oregano, Crushed Red Pepper
Lots of Garlic and Lemon Slices!*

Prep Time

1 day 12 hrs 15 mins

Difficult

Medium

Servings

16

Description

A marinated eggplant in olive oil and seasonings that is a delicious antipasto dish. Traditionally we make this in September to be served at Christmas time. Sometimes Nonna slipped a couple of finely sliced sundried tomatoes with dried basil into the mix for a variation.

Ingredients

- - 4 medium eggplants - ½ cup coarse salt - 2 tablespoons white vinegar - 2 cups extra-virgin olive oil - 1 bulb garlic cloves
- peeled and chopped - 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes - 2 tablespoons chopped fresh oregano - ½ teaspoon sea salt

Instructions

1. On the evening before you intend to make the dish
2. prepare the eggplant. Cut the ends off the eggplants
3. and peel. Cut the peeled eggplant into long strips about as big around as shoestring french fries. Place the strips into a large bowl
4. and stir in 1/2 cup of coarse salt. Place a sturdy dinner plate upside down in a clean sink
5. making sure that the drain is not blocked. Place a generous handful of the eggplant strips onto the center of the plate
6. and cover with another upside down dinner plate to create an eggplant sandwich. Layer more eggplant and plates until all of the eggplant is sandwiched. Cap it off with one additional plate
7. and press down firmly. Set a sturdy stock pot on top
8. and fill with enough water to create some pressure on the eggplant layers. Not so much pressure that you break your dishes though. Let this pressing process stand overnight. The next day
9. fill a large bowl with ice water. Begin dismantling your stack of plates. One layer (handful) at a time
10. briefly swish the eggplant around in the ice water
11. then squeeze dry and place into a clean bowl. If your hand starts to hurt
12. you are swishing too long. Once all of the eggplant is rinsed and squeezed and in the bowl
13. mix in the vinegar. Let rest for about 15 minutes. Heat a splash of the olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Once the oil is hot
14. add the garlic
15. red pepper flakes
16. oregano and sea salt. Cook and stir just until fragrant. You do not want to cook the garlic. Set aside to cool. Your eggplants should be well rested now. Give them one last squeeze. Make it a good one
17. or your melenzana is going to taste like pickles. "Don't worry
18. this is the last time
19. I promise..." (This is to be said to the poor little melenzana - they've been through so much!) Place the squeezed eggplants into a large bowl
20. and stir in the contents of the skillet and remaining olive oil until well blended. Transfer to sterile 1 pint or 1/2 pint jars. Make sure to fill the jars to the top
21. and top off with any olive oil that may be left in the bowl. Wipe the rims with a clean dry cloth
22. and seal tightly with new lids. Refrigerate for at least a month before opening.