

Caponata Indienne (Runi Rutnam)

This is a great dish for the summer! For those of you with gardens, this is a great way to use zucchini. Plus, the combo of eggplant, squash and tamarind is a recommended Ayurvedic combo for this time of the year.

Word of caution: take your time and make each vegetable separately. I know it takes time, but it really helps the texture and taste of the dish.

For you food trivia people, technically, if you cooked everything together, it would be a ratatouille (French) not caponata (Italian). For ratatouille, you would also use fresh tomatoes, diced up, instead of the tomato paste, and you would not use the tamarind. This makes for a more “gravy-ish” dish, equally delish, just different.

- 1 large-ish eggplant, cut into 1” cubes
- 1 large zucchini or two smaller ones, cubed into 1”cubes. (You could use a combo of yellow or green)
- 1 large yellow or Vidalia onion, cut into 1” cubes
- 1 large red bell pepper
- 4 Tbsp olive oil or other oil of choice
- 2 Tbsp mustard oil* (This is the Indienne part! If you don’t want to use mustard oil or don’t have it, just use 6 Tbsp of the oil you want. The mustard oil gives it a warmth and zing, but it is just as good regardless of the specific oil. Do not use coconut oil)
- 2 Tbsp tomato paste
- 3 - 4 Tbsp tamarind paste mixed with water to make ½ cup OR ½ cup cider vinegar. Taste the tamarind and water mixture to get it to the sourness you like. Some of the tamarind concentrates are really sour. The Swad brand is much less sour and is sweeter than other brands, so I prefer to use that.
- 1Tbsp monkfruit ‘sugar’ OR regular sugar (this is optional, and if you use a Vidalia onion you don’t need the sugar)
- Salt to taste
- Crushed red pepper to taste (optional)

Heat oven to 425 degrees.

Toss the eggplant pieces with a generous tablespoon of whatever oil you are using (NOT the mustard oil). Bake in the oven for 20 minutes, until it is soft and brown, but not mushy. You could heat oil in a skillet and saute the eggplant, but I find that eggplant sucks up too much oil, so I prefer to roast it. Plus, it roasts while you prepare the rest of the ingredients, so it is more efficient!



Heat up the remainder of the oil in a skillet. If you are using the mustard oil, mix it in with the other oil, and heat the pan on high heat til it just begins to smoke, then the pan off the heat, and lower the flame to medium. Let the oil cool down just a little. This step mellows out the mustard oil flavor, and it doesn’t taste raw, so don’t skip this step.

When the oil has cooled slightly, put the pan back on a medium-high flame and add cubed zucchini. Let it get a nice light brown color and tender-crisp, about 10 - 15 minutes. Don’t let it get mushy! Remove the zucchini from the pan, and set aside.

Add the onion and bell pepper, and stir over medium-high flame until onions are light brown, and tender, 10 - 15 minutes. Add the tomato paste, salt, pepper, sugar (if using) and tamarind (or cider vinegar) and stir to blend well and sugar/salt melts. Add the eggplant and zucchini and toss with the

onion mixture. This dish really tastes better if it sits for a while, the sweet and sour sauce gets a chance to permeate the vegetables. So cook it and let it sit for a few hours before serving, at room temperature.