

Caponata – Eggplant Relish
Yields: 8-10 as an appetizer

Ingredients:

1	globe	Eggplant, about 1 lb., diced
		Salt
4	Tbsp.	Vegetable oil, divided
1	small	Onion, minced
1		Celery Stalk, minced
1		Garlic clove, minced
4-6		Plum Tomatoes, finely chopped
½	C	Pitted Green Olives, finely chopped
¼	C	Pine Nuts, toasted
2-3	Tbsp.	Small Capers, drained
1	tsp.	Red Pepper Flakes
¼	C	Red Wine Vinegar
2-3	Tbsp.	Sugar
1	Tbsp.	Tomato Paste
¼	C	Chopped Basil

Procedure:

1. Toss the diced eggplant with about 2 tablespoons salt and put into a large bowl. Cover the bowl with a plate that just about fits the bowl and weigh it down with a heavy can. Let this sit for 1 hour. Drain the eggplant, rinse with fresh water and pat dry with paper towels.
2. Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and celery, season with salt. Cook, stirring occasionally until the onion begins to soften – about 5 minutes. Add the garlic. Cook 1-2 minutes more. Remove from the skillet and set aside.
3. Wipe the pan with a paper towel, turn the heat to high and add the remaining vegetable oil. Let this heat until the oil is nearly smoking. Add the eggplant and spread it out in as thin a layer as you can in the skillet. Let this sizzle for 1-2 minutes before stirring, and then let it sit for a full minute before stirring again. Cook like this for 5-6 minutes.
4. Add the onion-celery mixture, the tomatoes, olives, pine nuts, capers, and red pepper flakes. Stir well. Add the vinegar, sugar, and tomato paste and stir once more. Cook, stirring occasionally until eggplant is very soft, about 8 minutes.
5. Remove from heat and let cool to room temperature. Mix in the basil. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Caponata can be refrigerated, covered, up to 5 days.