

## Jacques Pepin's Ratatouille

- About ½ cup olive oil
- 1 eggplant (1¼ pounds); ends cut off, washed and cut, with skin on, into 1-inch cubes (about 4 cups)
- 3 medium zucchini (about 1 ¼ pounds, washed, ends removed, cut in 1-inch cubes (about 3 cups)
- 12 ounces onions (2-3 depending on size), cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 pound green bell peppers (2–3,) washed, seeded, and cut into 1-inch squares (about 3 cups)
- 4–5 well-ripened tomatoes; peeled, halved, seeded and coarsely cubed (about 4 cups)
- 5–6 cloves garlic; peeled, crushed, and very finely chopped (about 1 tablespoon)
- ½ cup water
- 2 teaspoons salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper



Heat ¼ cup of the oil in one or, better, two large skillets. First sauté the eggplant cubes, about 8 minutes; remove with slotted spoon and transfer to a large, heavy flameproof casserole. (The eggplant will absorb more oil while cooking than the other vegetables.) Then sauté the zucchini cubes until browned, about 8 minutes. Then transfer to the casserole.

Add about ¼ cup more oil to the pan and sauté the onions and peppers together for about 6 minutes. Add them to the casserole. Add the tomatoes, garlic, water, salt, and pepper to the casserole and bring to a boil over medium heat. Reduce heat, cover, and cook over low heat for 1 hour. Remove the cover, increase the heat to medium, and cook another 20 minutes, uncovered, to reduce some of the liquid; stir once in a while to prevent scorching.

Let the ratatouille rest for at least 30 minutes before serving.