

Caponata (Italian Antipasto)

From: Ollie Booker, Seguin, Texas

3 Eggplants - partially peeled and cut into small cubes	1 Small jar of capers, drained
1 Bunch of celery, cut into bite-sized pieces	A handful of pine nuts
1 Large onion, thinly sliced	Green olives, pitted and halved - to taste
1 Large green bell pepper, chopped	Olive oil
Garlic to taste, minced	Sugar to taste (about 1/4 cup)
1 Jalapeno pepper - OPTIONAL - if you want a spicier taste! Minced	Red wine vinegar to taste (about a cup)
1 lb. Fresh, skinned & seeded tomatoes (or lg. can of tomatoes)	Salt and pepper to taste

Sauté eggplant in olive oil and set aside. Sauté celery, onion, bell pepper, garlic, and jalapeno pepper (optional) in olive oil until tender. Stir together all the ingredients in a large pot and bring up to a boil, reduce to a simmer and cook (covered) for about 2 hours. Uncover and cook until very thick, about the consistency of chutney.

Turn off the heat and let set for at least 2 hours, but up to overnight (in the fridge). Taste the Caponata and make adjustments for taste.

Once the Caponata is to your liking, you can either eat it fresh or can it.

Because of the vinegar, I've read that you can use either the water bath method or a pressure cooker method for canning.

Water bath method*:

Reheat the Caponata and prepare several pint jars for canning. . Ladle caponata into jars leaving 1 inch headspace. Wipe rims with a damp cloth. Seal with lids. Water bath the pint jars for 20 minutes.

Pressure cooker method:

Reheat the Caponata and prepare several pint jars for canning. Ladle caponata into jars leaving 1 inch headspace. Wipe rims with a damp cloth. Seal with lids. Pressure cook pint jars at 10 pounds pressure for 30 minutes.

*Ollie uses the water bath method but she stores the jars in the refrigerator (for up to two years).