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Thomas Keller's Ratatouille

This is really Confit Byaldi (derived from Imam Bayildi) but is very similar to ratatouille



Serves 4

For piperade:

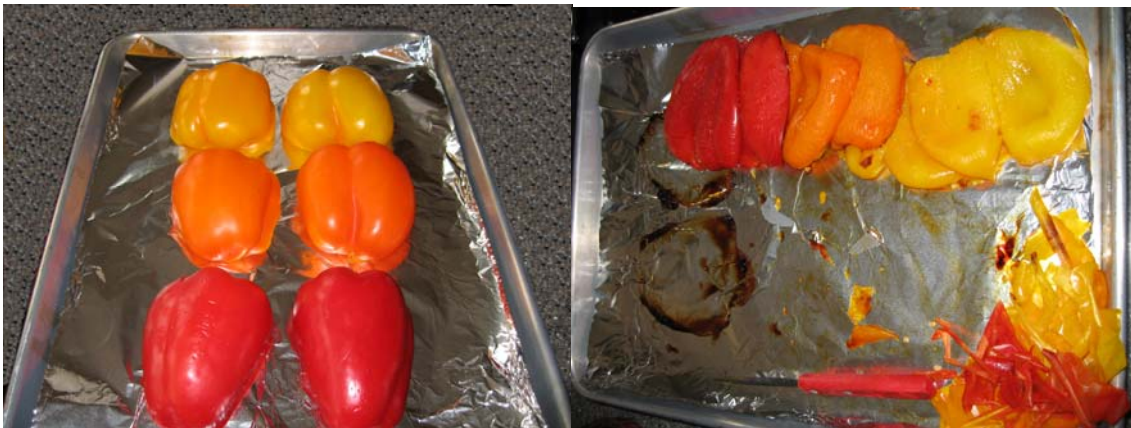
- 1/2 red pepper, seeds and ribs removed
- 1/2 yellow pepper, seeds and ribs removed
- 1/2 orange pepper, seeds and ribs removed
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1/2 cup finely diced yellow onion
- 3 tomatoes (about 12 ounces total weight), peeled, seeded and finely diced, juices reserved
- 1 sprig thyme
- 1 sprig flat-leaf parsley
- 1/2 bay leaf
- Kosher salt

For vegetables:

1 zucchini (4 to 5 ounces) sliced in 1/16-inch rounds
1 Japanese eggplant, (4 to 5 ounces) sliced into 1/16-inch rounds
1 yellow squash (4 to 5 ounces) sliced into 1/16-inch rounds
4 Roma tomatoes, sliced into 1/16-inch rounds
1/2 teaspoon minced garlic
2 teaspoons olive oil
1/8 teaspoon thyme leaves
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

For vinaigrette:

1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar
Assorted fresh herbs (thyme flowers, chervil, thyme)
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper



To make piperade:

Heat oven to 450 degrees. Place pepper halves on a foil-lined sheet, cut side down. Roast until skin loosens, about 15 minutes. Remove from heat and let rest until cool enough to handle. Peel and chop finely.



Combine oil, garlic and onion in medium skillet and cook over low heat on stovetop until very soft but not browned, about 8 minutes. Peel tomatoes by boiling for 2 minutes, cutting out stems and removing skin and seeds. Add tomatoes, their juices, thyme, parsley and bay leaf in a bouquet garni (wrapped in cheesecloth). Simmer over low heat until very soft and very little liquid remains, about 10 minutes, do not brown; add peppers and simmer to soften them. Season to taste with salt and discard herbs. Reserve 1 tablespoon of mixture and spread remainder in bottom of an 8-inch ovenproof skillet.

To prepare vegetables:



The vegetables can be sliced with an electric slicer or a mandoline (some food processors might be able to handle the job, but most are too narrow). The slices should be 1/16 inch.



Heat oven to 275 degrees. In center of skillet arrange 8 alternating slices of vegetables, 2 each of zucchini, eggplant, squash and tomatoes, overlapping in a circle so that 1/4 inch of each slice is exposed. Continue alternating and overlapping vegetables in close spiral that lets slices mound slightly in center. Repeat until pan is filled; all vegetables may not be needed.

Mix garlic, oil and thyme leaves in bowl and season with salt and pepper to taste. I use herbes de provence. Sprinkle over vegetables. Cover skillet with foil and crimp edges to seal well. Bake until vegetables are tender when tested with a paring knife, about 2 hours.

Uncover and bake for 30 minutes more. (Lightly cover with foil if it starts to brown.) If there is excess liquid in pan, place over medium heat on stove until reduced. (At this point it may be cooled, covered and refrigerated for up to 2 days. If desired, reheat in 350-degree oven until warm.)

To make vinaigrette:

Combine reserved piperade, oil, vinegar, herbs, and salt and pepper to taste in a bowl.

To serve:

Heat broiler and place byaldi underneath until lightly browned. Cut in quarters and very carefully lift one quarter onto plate with offset spatula. Turn spatula 90 degrees, guiding byaldi into fan shape. Drizzle vinaigrette around plate.



I serve this with tabbouleh and cucumber/avocado salad.

Note that regular tomatoes are often bland. So adding a tablespoon of tomato paste to the piperade is probably a good idea.

You can also buy preroasted and peeled red/yellow bell peppers (Mazetta brand) to save time in the making of the piperade.

Chinese eggplant is similar to Japanese eggplant and could be substituted also.