

Sicilian Eggplant caponata rigatoni

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Growing up, my mother would make eggplant caponata every summer using farm-fresh produce straight from our garden. The glossy purple eggplant, juicy tomatoes, and fragrant basil were transformed into a vibrant delicious caponata- a sweet tangy Italian relish. While caponata is traditionally served as a side dish or antipasto, I love tossing it with rigatoni for a hearty and satisfying pasta meal. Every bite is full of bold flavors of eggplant, olives, and capers , all simmer together in a rich tomato sauce. It's a delicious taste of summer and perfect way to cook with seasonal ingredients.

Delicious variations for Sicilian eggplant caponata rigatoni

1. Meaty caponata Rigatoni: Add crumbled Italian sausage or ground beef for a heathier twist. Brown the meat along with the onions and garlic before adding the tomatoes and eggplant.
2. Seafood Caponata Rigatoni: For a coastal Italian touch, add sauteed shrimp or chunks of white fish like cod or halibut. These seafood compliments the briny capers and olives.
3. Creamy Caponata Rigatoni: For a luxurious twist, stir in a cup of ricotta cheese and 1/2 cup of heavy cream just before serving. This creates a velvety sauce that pairs beautifully with the bold flavors of the caponata.

4. Pasta Swap caponata: While rigatoni is perfect for holding on to the caponata sauce, you can easily swap it for other pasta shapes. Try penne, orecchiette, or even spaghetti for a different texture.

Sicilian eggplant caponata rigatoni is a celebration of bold flavors and simple ingredients, bringing a taste of Italy to your table. Whether you stick to the classic version or try one of the delicious variations, this dish is sure to become a family favorite. Give it a try and let me know in the comments how you made it your own!!! Share your creations and tag me- I'd love to see your take on this Sicilian – inspired pasta. ENJOY!!!!

Ingredients

- 12 Oz. rigatoni Pasta
- 1 medium eggplant cut into medium dice
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 cup chopped onions
- 1 tbsp. minced garlic
- 4 cups chopped tomatoes
- 3 cup my easy marinara sauce
- 1 cup pasta water
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1/2 cup red wine vinegar
- 2 Tbsp. sugar
- 2 Tbsp. capers
- 1 cup pitted and sliced green olives
- 1/2 cup pine nuts
- 1/2 cup torn basil leaves
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese for serving

Instructions

1. In boiling salted water cook your pasta al dente
2. In a large saute pan over medium high heat in the olive oil saute the onion and garlic until soft and translucent
3. Add the tomatoes and eggplant and cook until the tomatoes burst and the eggplant is tender.

mix the sugar with the vinegar and add to the eggplant mixture along with the capers, olives. pine nuts and marinara sauce let it simmer for 20-25 minutes.

1. Toss the rigatoni in this delicious vegetarian eggplant , top with grated parmesan and shredded basil. ENJOY!!!!