

MOROCCAN VEGETABLE PLATTER

Indian eggplant are much smaller than Italian varieties, with more seeds and much harder to peel, therefore they are usually served cut into wedges and grilled, or cooked in stews, or roasted whole as in this recipe. Apart from the time needed to salt and drain the eggplant, all the vegetables cook together in the oven whilst the rest of the meal can be produced, so it is quite efficient. If you do not have Moroccan seasoning, Ras el Hanout or a curry powder will stand in instead. The yoghurt sauce makes use of the leftover brine in a jar of pickled olives- who knew a Martini has added benefits?!? Make this a truly memorable meal by cooking a leg of lamb or lamb shanks to pair with it and drizzle with Pomegranate Molasses.

Ingredients

8 medium Indian Eggplant, golf ball size
2 large Red Potatoes, about 1 pound
4 Cowhorn Peppers
1 Cup Cous Cous
2 + Tablespoons Moroccan Seasoning
½ Cup Yoghurt
3 Tablespoons Tahini Paste
1/3 Cup Pickled Olive brine
2 Tablespoons sliced fresh Mint
salt
Olive Oil and / or Butter

Directions

Oven 375F

Use a paring knife to cut the eggplant from the bottom almost through to the stem end and then cut again to create 4 quarters *but do not cut all the way through*. Prise open the eggplant a little and sprinkle lightly with salt and place in a colander in a sink to drain for about 40 minutes. Repeat for all eggplant. To make sauce, whisk together the yoghurt, tahini, lemon juice and a pinch of salt before folding in the sliced mint with a spoon (the mint will get caught in your whisk if you use it!)

When the Eggplant has drained use your fingers to prise them apart and then sprinkle liberally with Moroccan seasoning on the inside and place on a baking dish. Cut potatoes into large chunks about 1 ½ inches around and toss with a little olive oil and more Moroccan seasoning before placing on baking dish. Lastly rinse the peppers and place on baking dish as well. Bake for 45 - 60 minutes turning vegetables halfway through so that the potatoes are done, and the eggplant & peppers are soft.

Meanwhile cook couscous by bringing 1 ¼ Cups of water to a boil and add 1/2 teaspoon of salt and 1 Tablespoon Butter before pouring it over the dry couscous in a heatproof bowl. Cover with plastic wrap to steam. After 8 minutes use a fork to fluff the couscous; keep warm until ready to serve. To make sauce: whisk together yoghurt, tahini and olive juice. Pile couscous onto a platter and arrange roasted vegetables neatly before sprinkling over fresh mint. Serve with yoghurt sauce on the side and complement with chutney and salsa verde.