

## Roasted Eggplant Soup

Soups | October 2005



*A simple, earthy farm-to-table eggplant recipe. The flavors of the Mediterranean—roasted peppers, onions, garlic, and herbs—inspire this late-harvest puree, substantial enough for dunking with goat cheese or melted mozzarella crostini.*

- 2 LARGE ONIONS, CHOPPED
- 4 TBSP. OLIVE OIL, DIVIDED
- 2 CLOVES GARLIC, MINCED
- 2 LB. EGGPLANT
- 4 PLUM TOMATOES, CORED AND HALVED
- 3 CLOVES GARLIC, UNPEELED
- KOSHER SALT
- 1 RED SWEET PEPPER, QUARTERED LENGTHWISE, STEMS, SEEDS, AND MEMBRANES REMOVED\*
- 6½ CUPS CHICKEN STOCK OR BROTH
- ½ TSP. DRIED OREGANO, CRUSHED
- ½ TSP. DRIED ROSEMARY, CRUSHED
- 2 TBSP. SNIPPED FRESH BASIL
- ½ TO 1 TSP. KOSHER SALT
- ¼ TSP. GROUND BLACK PEPPER
- CROSTINI (SEE RECIPE)

In a large skillet over medium heat cook onions in 2 tablespoons olive oil, stirring occasionally, until richly caramelized and the color of honey (15 minutes). Add 2 cloves minced garlic; cook a few minutes more. Set aside.

Peel and chop eggplant and place in an oiled shallow baking pan. Place tomatoes, cut side up, next to eggplant. Place unpeeled garlic cloves in pan. Drizzle with remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil and sprinkle lightly with salt. Bake, uncovered, in a 300° oven 1 hour. When cool enough to handle, squeeze garlic from skins. Set vegetables aside. Preheat broiler.

Place sweet pepper, cut sides down, on a foil-lined baking sheet. Broil 5 to 6 inches from the heat for 7 to 9 minutes or until skin is black and blistered. Wrap in the foil and let stand 20 minutes. Use a small sharp knife to peel the skin from the pepper.

In a large pot stir together the eggplant, tomatoes, roasted garlic, cooked onion mixture, pepper pieces, stock, oregano, and rosemary. Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Simmer, covered, for 1 hour. Cool slightly. Puree mixture in batches in a food processor to desired consistency (chunky or smooth). Stir in basil, ½ to 1 teaspoon salt, and black pepper. Serve with *Crostini*. Makes 8 to 10 servings.

**CROSTINI:** Top 6 to 8 toasted ¼-inch-thick baguette slices with 2 ounces of sliced or crumbled fresh mozzarella or goat cheese, drizzle with 1 to 2 teaspoons olive oil, and broil 3 to 4 inches from the heat for 1 to 2 minutes.

\*If desired, substitute ¾ cup of bottled roasted red sweet pepper and omit the broiling step.