

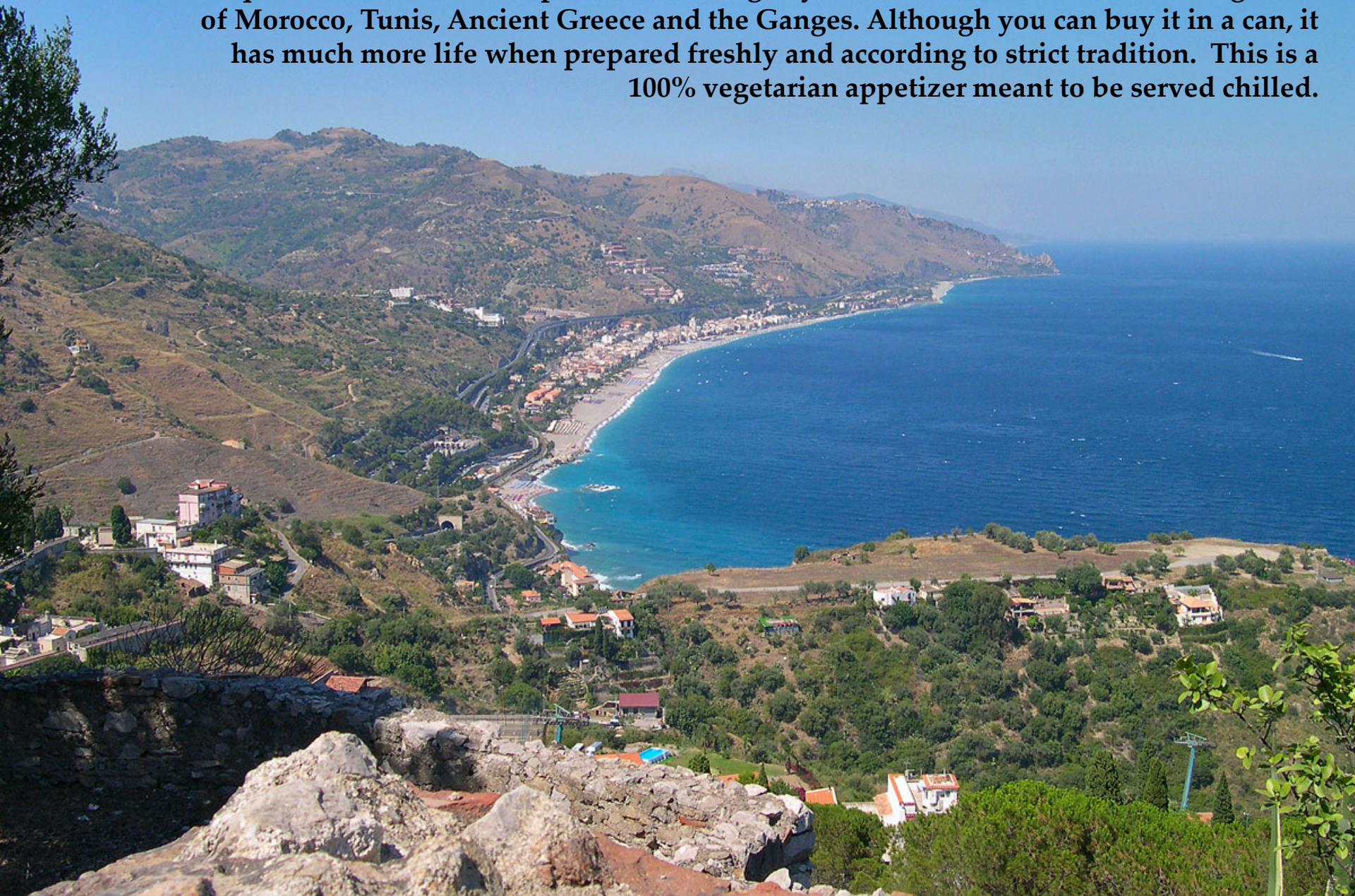
# CAPONATA



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**Like the island of Sicily where it originated, Caponata is an ironic juxtaposition of bitter and sweet, pungent and mild. Like the island itself, it brings together and unites ubiquitous but distant components reaching beyond the Mediterranean, featuring hints of Morocco, Tunis, Ancient Greece and the Ganges. Although you can buy it in a can, it has much more life when prepared freshly and according to strict tradition. This is a 100% vegetarian appetizer meant to be served chilled.**





# Ingredients

Although eggplant is the main player in this ancient drama, the supporting actors and actresses win the awards at the end of the day if they're chosen carefully.

This recipe provides 8-12 servings



- Three large fresh eggplant (Avoid dull, flaccid, lumpy, blemished. Select shiny and taut fruit)
- Olive oil (have plenty on hand)
- Garlic (6-8 large cloves)
- Celery (At least half a full stalk)
- Fresh Italian parsley (one clump)
- Sicilian cured green olives (as shown)
- Jar of capers
- Granulated cane sugar
- 3 oz. (2 spoonful) of tomato paste
- Salt and pepper





- The only ingredient you need to cook is the eggplant. Everything else goes in raw.
- Using the flat part of a chef's knife blade, smash 3 cloves of garlic and place in large saute pan with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of virgin olive oil as shown at bottom left.
- The first objective is to slab the eggplant as shown (no more than 3-4 layers), then cut the slabs into cubes approximately 1-1.5 square inches. Eggplant oxidizes (turns brown and yucky) quickly so you'll want to work swiftly through one fruit and get it in the pan cooking before cutting the second.





- Using low heat, cook the eggplant slowly by simmering in the olive oil.
- Eggplant will soak up a lot of oil, so as the fruit chunks appear to dry out, keep adding a little olive oil to keep things cooking evenly
- Salt and pepper liberally and cut one of the other eggplant – fit it in while the first is cooking if you can, otherwise you'll have to start from the beginning of the last slide's step
- Do not cook on high heat since you'll blacken it. The eggplant should cook to an even light brown as shown below, this might take around 12-20 minutes.
- When it's done, let the eggplant cool with all of the leftover oil in a bowl you can set aside.





- Slice approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a full celery stalk as shown
- Slice 2 cups of Sicilian green olives in half (also shown)



- Chop parsley, but do not mince, leave some entire leaves intact
- Get a whopping spoonful of tomato paste ready (as shown), drain the vinegar out of the capers and have at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of sugar on hand
- The sugar is absolutely essential, sorry that honey or any other sweetener substitute just will not suffice



- **Mix it all together:** cooked eggplant with celery, olives, parsley, tomato paste (do not use more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a 6 oz. can though), sugar, capers. It should look like this. Throw a few raw garlic cloves into it.
- **Chill in refrigerator for at least 4 hours before serving (overnight better)**







A sa benediga vosia!

