

Eggplant Caviar

MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS

INGREDIENTS

- 2 medium eggplants or 1 large eggplant
- 1 red pepper
- 6 ounces shiitake mushrooms, stems removed (caps only)
- 1 shallot, chopped
- 5 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice (approximately ½ lemon)
- 1 ½ tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- salt & pepper to taste

★ J. NOELLE NOTES

Ideally, try to find medium-sized, long, thin eggplants. In a pinch, you can use the large Italian variety.



GRILL

To roast the eggplant and red pepper, start a charcoal or wood fire, preheat a gas grill, or turn the oven to 500 degrees.

To grill or roast the eggplant... Pierce the eggplant in several places with a thin-bladed knife or skewer. Grill or roast, turning occasionally, until eggplant collapses and the skin blackens, 15 to 30 minutes depending on size. Remove and cool. When the eggplant is cool enough to handle, part the skin (if it hasn't split on its own), scoop out the flesh and roughly chop.

To grill the red pepper... Place the pepper on the grill and cook, turning occasionally, and taking care not to let the peppers burn too badly (some blackening is not only okay, it's desirable), until the pepper collapses, 10 to 20 minutes total. Place the pepper in a plastic bag or a bowl covered with plastic wrap. Let cool, then peel, discarding skin, seeds, and stem and roughly chop.

To roast the red pepper... Put the pepper in a roasting pan and place in oven, with rack set near the top. Roast, shaking the pan frequently, until the pepper shrivels and collapses, 30 to 40 minutes. Place the pepper in a plastic bag or a bowl covered with plastic wrap. Let cool, then peel, discarding skin, seeds, and stem and roughly chop.

SAUTÉ

Place 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a pan and sauté the shallots and mushrooms until the mushrooms have given up their moisture and just begin to brown. Set aside to cool.

COMBINE

In the bowl of a food processor, combine the eggplant, red pepper, mushrooms, shallots, remaining 3 tablespoons oil, lemon juice, parsley and salt. Pulse in 10 second intervals until you get the desired consistency (Eggplant Caviar should be finely chopped, but not pureed). Season to taste with additional salt and freshly ground black pepper. Serve with homemade pita chips.