

Sausage and Eggplant Soup

makes about 3 quarts

Ingredients

- 6 tablespoons olive oil
- 4-5 cups cubed eggplant {1 large eggplant}
- 1 1/2 cups chopped onions
- 1/2 cup chopped celery or fennel
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 2 teaspoons crushed fennel seed
- 4 bay leaves
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 pound sweet Italian sausage {without casing}
- 5 cups chicken broth {more if soup is too thick}
- 2 14.5 ounce cans diced tomatoes
- 1 teaspoon salt {more if needed}
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper



Directions

1. Heat a large stockpot over medium-high heat add 4 tablespoons of olive oil and the eggplant, stirring occasionally, for 4-5 minutes until just tender. Transfer the eggplant to a bowl.
2. In the same pot, add the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil, onions, celery/fennel, garlic, fennel seed, bay leaves, basil, thyme, salt and pepper. Cook over medium-high heat for 4-5 minutes, stirring frequently.
3. Add the sausage and sauté 5-6 minutes, breaking up the meat into small pieces.
4. Add diced tomatoes, the eggplant, and chicken broth.
5. Bring to a boil. Lower the heat to medium-low, cover the pot with the lid and simmer for 10-15 minutes. If the soup is too thick, add more broth and more salt and pepper to taste. Remove the bay leaves before serving.