

CAPONATA

FROM BOCCA (cookbook)

Food is an emotive subject, especially for Italians. Everyone has their own way of doing things, whilst everyone else's is not worse but wrong. I made the mistake, when Bocca di Lupo first opened, of asking our Sicilian waiters (we had four at the time) what they thought of my caponata. They all detested it.

'You can't put celery in caponata – it's disgusting – but at least the vegetables are nice and chunky.'

'You idiot, the vegetables should be small and combined – but I like that you serve anchovies on top, like my mother.'

'You never put anchovies in caponata – Luca's mother is a whore! And where are the pine nuts?'

'Pine nuts? Imbecile! Jacob ha fatto il bravo without pine nuts, and of course it has to have celery... Oh, but you're right, this is gross – there aren't any peppers!'

I think, in fact, they came close to killing each other that day over a plate of caponata. Voices grew loud, chests puffed out, and body language became threatening. I felt like crying, but put an end to the argument by saying:

'This is the way I make caponata. And everyone else is wrong...'

FROM BOCCA (at home):

The saga continues, as just before lockdown we switched from our old recipe (super-chunky vegetables, braised in the oven, no peppers) to a new version that half of us prefer (including one lobe of my brain) (smaller diced vegetables, braised slowly in a wide open pan on the stove, with peppers sometimes). The result, much like the demon on one shoulder and angel on the other, is interminable debate about which is better.

Here is some caponata...

You will need

1 person to argue with, about how the caponata could be better

Your pack serves 2 as a side or anipasto, and contains

[1] caponata

[2] parsley leaves

ALLERGENS: all packs prepared in a mixed kitchen, we cannot guarantee the absence of *any* allergen. All packs of this dish contain celery and alliums, as well as SO₂ from the wine that made the vinegar.

Directions

Allow the caponata to come to room temperature. This in itself is the subject of much debate, as some like it chilled and some like it hot (like Curtis & Lemon). But I like it room temp.

Serve the caponata with the parsley leaves on top.

ENJOY!