

Ratatouille Soup with Eggplant Roulade

Adapted by Our Young Chefs from "300 Sensational Soups,"

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Makes 6 to 8 servings



Herbes de Provence ("herbes" is the French spelling of the word herbs) makes ratatouille taste like it should — and this soup is based on those flavors. This seasoning is a blend of herbs that grow in southern France, including thyme, sage, rosemary, fennel seed, summer savory, marjoram and lavender. If you don't have this herb blend in your pantry, use an equal amount of the combination of thyme and rosemary as a substitute. The word roulade (pronounced roo läd') is the French term for a dish (or item) cooked or served in the form of a roll.

INGREDIENTS

SOUP

1 large onion, $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch dice

3 large zucchini, $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch dice/ cubes

2 Cubanelle peppers (or other mildly spicy peppers), stem and seeds removed, $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch dice

3 to 4 cloves garlic

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh flat-leaf (Italian) parsley leaves, coarsely diced plus 2 to 3 tablespoons, coarsely diced, for garnish

$\frac{1}{2}$ + cup (2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces) freshly grated Pecorino Romano cheese, divided - $\frac{1}{4}$ cup plus $\frac{1}{4}$ + cup (very generous)

DIRECTIONS

Prepare the vegetables; onions: Cut the onion into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch dice; set aside in a small mixing bowl.

Zucchini and peppers: Wash the zucchini and cubanelle peppers under cool running water; it is helpful to use a vegetable brush when washing the zucchini to remove any fine dirt that may cling to the skin. Pat the vegetables dry with a towel. Remove the stem and seeds of the peppers; discard. Cut the zucchini and peppers into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubes/ dice; combine in a large bowl. Set aside.

Garlic: Prepare the garlic by one of three methods: finely dice with a knife, grate using a microplane OR pass through a garlic press. Add to the bowl of zucchini and cubanelle peppers.

Parsley: Wash the fresh parsley under cool running water; dry by gently tossing in a cloth kitchen towel OR use a salad spinner. Remove/cut off the leaves and fine stems; coarsely dice about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (loosely packed) parsley plus 2 to 3 tablespoons coarsely diced parsley to save for a garnish at the end of the recipe. Set the two amounts of parsley aside separately for later.

Prepare the cheese: Shred 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces Pecorino Romano cheese on the small holes of a box grater OR a coarse microplane. Measure a generous $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Romano to use as a garnish for the soup and the remainder of the Romano to add to the roulade ricotta filling mixture. Set the two amounts of Pecorino Romano cheese aside separately to be used later.



$\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil
Diced onion (*prepared earlier*)
2 teaspoons *herbes de Provence*
(*see the info in the headnote*)
OR 2 teaspoons of a combination
of dried thyme and rosemary
Diced/cubed zucchini and Cubanelle
peppers with garlic (*prepared
earlier*)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon freshly ground black
pepper (or to taste)

2 cans (28-ounces each) tomatoes,
undrained, chopped
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup parsley, coarsely diced
(*prepared earlier*)
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ quarts (6 cups) chicken *OR*
vegetable broth *OR* stock
Salt and pepper, to taste

EGGPLANT ROULADE

1 large eggplant, sliced lengthwise
into 6 or 7 slices, each slice
slightly thinner than $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black
pepper

1 egg yolk
2 cups ricotta cheese, preferably
room temperature
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup grated Pecorino Romano
cheese (*prepared earlier*)
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon freshly grated
nutmeg (*optional*)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon minced fresh thyme
OR a generous pinch dried thyme
leaves
 $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon crushed red pepper
flakes (*optional*)
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon (generous) salt
 $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon freshly grated black
pepper

Assemble and cook the soup: In a large heavy pot or Dutch oven, heat the **olive oil** over medium-high heat. Add the **diced onion** and **herbes de Provence**; sauté until the **onion** starts to soften, about 2 minutes. Add the **zucchini**, **Cubanelle peppers**, **garlic**, $\frac{1}{2}$ **teaspoon salt** and **pepper**; sauté until the vegetables start to soften, about 3 minutes.

Simmer the soup: Add the **tomatoes**, $\frac{1}{4}$ **teaspoon salt** and **parsley**; sauté, stirring occasionally, until some of the **tomato juices** have evaporated, about 5 minutes. Add the **broth** or **stock**; raise the heat to high to bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low; simmer until the **vegetables** are tender and the flavors are blended, about 30 minutes. Taste; add **salt** and **pepper**, if needed.

Meanwhile, prepare the eggplant roulade: Preheat the oven to 375°F. Line two baking sheet pans with foil; set aside for later. Wash the **eggplant** under cool running water; pat dry with a towel. Slice the **eggplant** lengthwise *slightly thinner* than $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick. Arrange the **eggplant slices** on the prepared baking sheet pans. Using a pastry brush, brush both sides of the slices with **olive oil**; sprinkle both sides *lightly* with **salt** and **pepper**. Bake at 375°F until tender, about 20 minutes.

Blend the roulade filling: In a medium bowl, combine the **egg yolk**, **ricotta**, **Pecorino Romano cheese**, **nutmeg**, **thyme**, **hot pepper flakes** (if using), **salt** and **pepper**; stir with a spatula to blend completely.

Fill and roll the roulades: Measure a little less than 2 **tablespoons** of the **seasoned ricotta filling**; spread it over one side of an **eggplant slice** - leave a space blank without **ricotta filling** about $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch deep all the way across the end at the wider of the two narrow ends. Starting at the narrower of the two narrow ends, roll up the **eggplant slice**, jellyroll-style, with the filling inside; secure with a toothpick, if necessary. Place on one of the foil-lined baking sheet pan. Repeat this process to fill and roll up all of the **eggplant slices**. Bake the **roulades** at 375°F until the **eggplant** is browned and the **cheese mixture** is hot, about 10 minutes. ➡

Finish the soup: After the **soup** has simmered and the **vegetables** are tender, it is ready to be served.

An *optional step* that can be added to finish the soup: With the heat turned off, use an immersion blender to purée the **soup** to make the texture varied - process so that some of the **soup** is puréed to a smoother texture and some is left chunky.

Garnish and serve the soup: Ladle the hot **soup** into heated bowls; top each serving with an **eggplant roulade**. (It is best to use shallow bowls or soup plates so that the **roulades** do not sink to the bottom.) **GARNISH** with shredded **Pecorino Romano cheese** and **parsley** (*both prepared earlier*). Serve immediately.



Immersion blender
