

Eggplant Caviar

Ingredients

- 1 eggplant
- 1/2-cup walnut pieces
- 1/4 cup minced onion
- 1/4 cup minced fresh parsley (I always use Italian parsley)
- 1-2 tsp. minced hot finger chile pepper, depending on taste (I use a dash or two of cayenne or a couple hits of Tabasco instead)
- 1 clove garlic, minced (OK, I use 3-4)
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice

Directions

1. Prick eggplant several places with a fork. Place on a microwave-safe dish and cook at full power uncovered until soft and collapsed (10 minutes, more or less, depending on your oven). Set aside to cool.
2. Arrange walnut pieces on another microwave-safe dish and cook, uncovered, until fragrant and toasted, 2-1/2 minutes. Chop fine.
3. Scrape the eggplant flesh onto a cutting board and coarsely chop.
4. Transfer the eggplant to a bowl. Stir in the walnuts, onion, parsley, chili, garlic, salt and pepper. Then slowly beat in the oil and lemon juice. Adjust seasonings if necessary.

Yield: Makes 1-1/2 to 2 cups, depending on the size of your eggplant!

Submitted by Frannie: "Make the night before you leave town, seal in a Rubbermaid container, and bury at the bottom of the cooler. It's best when it sits around for a few days to a week, so it's perfect with brie on crackers for a pre-Burn cocktail party!"