

Savory Eggplant Rounds- Butterfly Garden (2023)

Ingredients

2 medium eggplant, preferable a slender variety such as Dancer
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1/3 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
One recipe of creamy whipped feta
One recipe of chimichurri sauce
Roasted red cherry tomatoes
Parsley leaves, for garnish

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees.
2. Cover a sheet pan with parchment paper (or aluminum foil). Brush lightly with olive oil.
3. Cut off ends of eggplant, discard. Cut uniformly thick slices about 1/3" to 1/2" thick. Lay out on the prepared sheet pan without the slices touching. Brush each slice with the remaining olive oil, ensuring the top of each slice is well coated. (The smaller diameter end of the eggplant can be used for something else.)
4. Roast eggplant for 20-27 minutes until slightly browned. Timing will vary based upon the thickness of and the moisture in the eggplant slices. Alternatively, roast for 20-24 minutes then broil for 1-2 minutes to brown the slices, keeping a watchful eye on the eggplant.
5. Cool until room temperature. Place eggplant slices on your serving dish.
6. Carefully spread a scant teaspoon of the whipped feta on each slice, swirling out from the center with a teaspoon so as to leave the browned edges exposed.
7. Drizzle or dollop a bit of chimichurri sauce on each slice using any pattern you prefer.
8. Artfully arrange several roasted tomatoes and the parsley leaves around the roasted eggplant slices.

Chimichurri Sauce

Original recipe ingredients:

3 Tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 Tablespoon red wine vinegar
1 clove garlic, minced
1/4 cup parsley, finely chopped
1/4 teaspoon dried oregano
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon red pepper flakes

As I processed this in my small food processor, I found that I had to double the ingredients to accomplish any processing. I threw in a bit extra of parsley. I added 1-2 more tablespoons of oil to provide enough liquid to process. I also added in about a teaspoon of the lemon zest, since I had it from the feta dip recipe. This flavoring was noticed at our tasting. I used less red pepper flakes to avoid the "hot". As I taste tested, I compared to my standard chimichurri recipe. It had a higher ratio of vinegar to oil, so I added another tablespoon of red vinegar. (My chimichurri recipe has a 2 oil: 1 vinegar ratio.) The garlic I used I had harvested about three weeks prior, so it was very fresh.

Therefore, the basic recipe:

1 clove garlic, minced
1/3 cup parsley, finely chopped
1/4 teaspoon dried oregano
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon lemon zest
Pinch of red pepper flakes
4 Tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra
2 Tablespoons red wine vinegar

Combine all ingredients except the oil and vinegar in a food processor. Pulse just enough to blend. Add in the olive oil and puree until well combined. Blend in the vinegar. Add additional olive oil to obtain the desired consistency.

Whipped Feta

Ingredients

4 ounces feta crumbles (or quality block feta, drained)
3/8 cup Greek yogurt
1/2 lemon zest
1 Tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

Directions

1. In the bowl of a food processor fitted with a blade, combine the feta, Greek yogurt and lemon zest. Blend, and while the processor is running, drizzle olive oil through the top opening until the feta is whipped to a smooth texture.