

Smoky Eggplant Soup

By David Tanis | **YIELD** About 6 cups | **TIME** 30 minutes

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds small firm eggplants
5 tablespoons olive oil
2 cups sliced white or yellow onion
Salt and pepper
6 garlic cloves, minced
Pinch cayenne
6 cups chicken broth or mild vegetable broth
3 to 4 tablespoons lemon juice
½ teaspoon lemon zest
1 tablespoon za'atar, available in Middle Eastern groceries
2 teaspoons chopped parsley

PREPARATION

Step 1

Poke 2 or 3 holes in eggplants with a paring knife, then place on a baking sheet under hot broiler, about 2 inches from flame. Cook for 3 or 4 minutes, allowing skins to blacken and char. Turn and cook on other side until eggplants have softened completely, about 4 minutes more. Set aside to cool, then remove and discard skins and roughly chop eggplant flesh.

Step 2

Meanwhile, put 3 tablespoons olive oil in a heavy-bottomed stainless or enameled soup pot over medium-high heat. Add onion, season generously with salt and pepper, and cook until softened and beginning to color, 5 to 7 minutes. Add garlic, cayenne and reserved eggplant and cook 1 minute more, then add broth and bring to a brisk simmer. Reduce heat and simmer gently for 10 minutes. Check seasoning of broth and adjust salt.

Step 3

Purée soup in batches in blender. Strain through fine-meshed sieve and discard solid debris and seeds. Add 3 tablespoons lemon juice to puréed soup and taste again, adding more as necessary. Soup should be well seasoned and rather lemony.

Step 4

Mix lemon zest with remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil for garnish. Ladle soup into small bowls, topping each bowl with 1 teaspoon lemon oil, 1/2 teaspoon za'atar and some chopped parsley. May be served hot or cold.

PRIVATE NOTES

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