

Vegan Egyptian Okra with Tomatoes–Bamya bel zait

It is okra season in Texas, and I am craving this flavorful stew.

My son-in-law Joe shared this treasured recipe years ago while dating my daughter. While there are countless other reasons to love him, this recipe certainly added to his appeal. If like me, you have spent your life avoiding okra I think you will discover this Egyptian classic surpasses all expectations and becomes a summer favorite.

Please consider doubling this recipe allowing for some leftovers.

Ingredients

2 lbs of freshly harvested okra, tops carefully trimmed, removing the woody stem yet keeping the pod intact

Two shallots, finely minced

One clove of finely minced garlic (optional)

One tea ground coriander

One tea ground cumin

1/4 tea cayenne pepper (or more if preferred)

4 TBL of tomato paste

6 cups of chopped fresh tomatoes or canned crushed tomatoes

1/2 bunch of chopped cilantro

Juice from 1 large lemon

Salt

Instructions

In a large, heavy skillet, dry roast okra, turning to add a darkened color to all sides. Set okra aside on a plate.

Add olive oil to the same skillet and saute shallots and garlic if used.

Add coriander and ground cumin, and tomato paste, stirring to thicken and caramelize.

Pour in tomatoes, cilantro, and lemon juice, combining well, then gently add okra.

Salt to taste.

This mixture is now ready to stew in the skillet with a lid on the stovetop, on low heat, or in a preheated (375 degrees oven).

Allow 30- 45 mins for cooking until okra is tender.

Adjust seasonings as desired.

Serve over rice.