

# VEGETABLE TIAN

This is a simply gorgeous ratatouille-like dish that is equally good served on its own or as a side dish with fish or meat. It's so beautiful I always think it must have served as an inspiration for the ratatouille in the Pixar film of the same name. It's a reminder that the outcome depends not only on the ingredients we put into a dish but also how we use them. I love a classic, mushy ratatouille with a fried egg on top and a slightly crunchy ratatouille (see page 187) for serving with slow-cooked lamb. But I make this stunning tian when I care as much about how the dish looks as I do how it tastes.



**PREHEAT THE OVEN** to 400°F/200°C.

Slice the tomatoes, zucchini, and eggplant into thin rounds, no thicker than ⅛ inch/3 mm. You can use a mandoline if you have one.

Put the eggplant in a colander set in the sink, sprinkle with the coarse salt, and let sit for 20 minutes. This will help extract some of the bitterness from the eggplant.

Bring 2 cups/475 ml water to a boil. Pour over the eggplant to rinse and let drain, then gently pat dry with a paper towel.

Rub the halved garlic clove all over an 8 × 12-inch/20 × 30-cm baking dish. Starting from the outside and working your way in, arrange the sliced vegetables, alternating them in tight rows. Sprinkle the sliced garlic, the thyme, and bay leaves on top, drizzle with the olive oil, and season with salt and pepper.

Bake until the vegetables are just tender, about 30 minutes. Sprinkle with the parsley and serve immediately.

## SERVES 6

- 4 large tomatoes
- 3 large zucchini
- 2 medium eggplant
- 1½ tablespoons coarse sea salt
- 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced, plus 1 garlic clove, halved
- 8 sprigs of fresh thyme
- 3 bay leaves
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil for drizzling
- Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- A handful of finely chopped fresh parsley