

Veggie Pitas with Feta Cheese

6 tablespoons olive oil, divided use
1 medium Japanese eggplant, (1/4-1/2-inch slices)
1/2 bulb fresh fennel, trimmed and sliced (about 1/4-1/2-inch slices)
1/2 medium onion, sliced
1/2 red bell pepper, seeded and cut into medium dice
1/2 orange, yellow or green bell pepper, seeded and cut into medium dice
1 medium zucchini, sliced
1 medium crookneck squash, sliced
10-12 mushrooms, cleaned and sliced
6-8 green onions, trimmed, with about 4 inches of green left on
2 lemons, cut in half
Vegetable seasoning blend of your choice, or just salt and pepper, to taste
6-8 loaves pita bread, warmed
1 - 1 1/2 cups crumbled feta cheese for garnish
More olive oil for dressing
Fresh lemon for dressing

Heat oven to 200 degrees.

Warm 3 tablespoons of the oil in a large saute pan or on a flat-top grill or griddle. When it is medium-hot, add the eggplant, fennel and onion and saute, turning gently once or twice (you want the veggies to pick up a little bit fresh-roasted, grilled color and be tender, but not mushy, at the end). When the eggplant and fennel are about half done (2 minutes or so) add the rest of the vegetables, and as much of the rest of the olive oil as needed. You may wish to saute the vegetables in batches, too, if you don't have a large flat-top grill. As the vegetables are cooking, season lightly with your favorite veggie blend seasoning that includes salt. (See note below.)

Note: There are many great blends out there for vegetables, but you can experiment with seasoned salts, such as garlic and onion salt, vegetable-flavored salts, herb salts, such as dill salt, and so forth. Don't go too heavy on fresh rosemary, however.

While vegetables are cooking, wrap the pita loaves in foil and warm them in the oven.

When the veggies are lightly browned and tender, and well seasoned, squeeze over the juice from one of the lemons. Take the pita bread out of the oven and lay them each on a plate, depending on how many you are serving. Be sure the vegetables are mixed well. Spoon the vegetables onto the pitas and sprinkle over each about 1 tablespoon of feta cheese. Have more lemon, feta and olive oil for people to add more dressing themselves, as they wish.

Makes 6-8 servings.

Recipe by Dame Bonnie Walker, Les Dames d' Escoffier