Ratatouille

For 2 people

2 Tablespoons olive oil
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 cup medium yellow onion, diced
1 small globe eggplant, diced into ½” cubes or 3 medium-sized Japanese eggplant
1 medium green zucchini, diced into ½” cubes
1 medium yellow zucchini, diced into ½” cubes
1 cup Crimini mushrooms
1 bell pepper, red or green, diced into ½” cubes
1 ½ cup chopped ripe red tomatoes
½ cup olives, pitted.
1 bay leaf
¼ cup freshly chopped herbs (basil, parsley, oregano) and a pinch of minced fresh rosemary (optional) OR 1 teaspoon each of dried herbs (basil, parsley, oregano) and a pinch of dried rosemary (optional)
Sea salt and black pepper, to taste (approximately 1 teaspoon of salt and ½ teaspoon pepper)

1. Heat the olive oil until hot, but not smoking. Add the onion and sauté for two minutes.
2. Add the eggplant and sauté for 2 minutes.
3. Add the zucchini, mushrooms, bell pepper, garlic and bay leaf, stirring occasionally so that the mixture cooks evenly. Cook for 2 minutes.
4. Add the tomatoes, olives, salt and pepper (if you’re using dried herbs, add them now), and cook until the vegetables are tender and the tomatoes have cooked down.
5. Turn off the heat, add the fresh herbs and stir. Taste for salt level.

Ratatouille can be eaten hot, at room temperature, or cold. It is delicious with bread, pasta, polenta and served as an appetizer, a side or main dish.
Eggplant has been embedded in Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cultures since the 9th century. It is popular in Asian dishes, and has become a standard in vegetarian cooking. It can be baked, sautéed, grilled, fried, puréed, stewed, stuffed and pickled. It is one of the featured ingredients in SFPL's Biblio Bistro programming at the Heart of the City Farmers' Market, every 3rd Wednesday of the month (weather permitting).