

Briam | Greek Vegetables in Tomato Sauce

Swick

Serves 1 | Active Time: 20 minutes | Total Time: 1 hour 45 minutes

Chef's Notes

There are many versions of this dish depending where one is from in Greece. Oftentimes, the vegetables used in briam are simply those that one has on hand or they are simply the family's favorite combination. For instance, many recipe call for zucchini; however my partner Joe doesn't like their texture once cooked down, therefore, I leave them out. After much experimenting, this is our favorite combination — in particular the potatoes.

Note: For extra flavor and color, some recipes call for lightly shallow-frying the vegetables before assembling the dish.

Step 1: Preparing Your Mise en Place

- 3 lrg floury potatoes, peeled and cut into large dice or sliced into 1-1.5 cm-thick pieces
 - 2 onions, cut in half, then sliced
 - 2 carrots, large diced
 - 1 lrg eggplant, diced (or 3 sm eggplant sliced into rounds)
 - 2 sm green bell peppers, cut in large pieces
 - 2 sm red bell peppers, cut in large pieces
 - 1 1/2 cups green beans, cleaned and cut in half
 - 2 tbsp freshly chopped flat-leaf parsley
 - 4 medium-sized tomatoes, chopped or 400 g canned diced tomatoes*
- For this dish, you basically need about 1 1/2 to 2 cups of each vegetable. If you like one type of vegetable more than another, then feel free to use more of that instead. Also, many recipes call for zucchini; however, we found them to be too watery for our tastes, so we used red peppers instead.
- *Note: For the best final consistency, pulse the diced tomatoes a few times in the food processor before using.
- While this may seem like a lot of vegetables, they will cook down considerably during cooking, releasing all of their water and juices — resulting in about half of their original volume.
- As for the types of vegetables, feel free to experiment with other vegetables (see note at bottom of recipe).

Step 2: Assembling & Baking the Dish

- sea salt, to taste
- freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 cup water
- 1/3 cup olive oil, or to taste

Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C).

To assemble the briam, place the potatoes on the bottom of a large baking or casserole dish and season with a bit of salt and pepper. Continue to lay the vegetables — hardest first, softest last — seasoning well between each addition or layer.

Next, add the tomatoes and chopped parsley. Lastly, add the tomato paste to the water and stir to combine. Pour this mixture all over the vegetables, followed by the olive oil. Note: The amount of olive oil used to make Briam comes down to personal preference. Many recipes call for at least a cup of olive oil; however we use considerably less and it still produces delicious results.

To bake the dish, loosely cover the baking dish with foil and place onto the lower rack of the preheated oven. Check the vegetables about every half an hour to make sure the ingredients on top are not drying out or burning. You may need to gently press the vegetables down into the liquid a bit during cooking.

Let cook for approximately an hour to an hour and a half, or until the vegetables are quite soft.

*Note: For more color, after an hour check to see that the vegetables are cooked through, if so remove the foil and roast for another 1/2 hour, uncovered, until the vegetables start to turn golden brown.

Allow to cool slightly before serving. To serve, sprinkle some freshly chopped parsley, if desired.

This dish goes particularly well with many of these delicious plant-based Greek recipes — Hummus, Tzatziki, Lemon Potatoes, Baked Beans | Plaki, Dolmades and Pita Bread.