

BRAISED OKRA WITH TOMATO SAUCE AND GARLIC

The secret to perfectly textured okra is vinegar. Try this dish alone with crusty bread or as side dish to any meat.

- 2 10-ounce packages frozen, cut okra
 - ½ cup red wine vinegar
 - ¼ cup olive or vegetable oil
 - 2 medium onions, chopped coarsely
 - 2 cloves garlic, chopped
 - 1 8oz can tomato sauce
 - 1 jalapeno pepper, pierced 3 times with a fork (optional)
 - 1tsp. salt
 - ¼ tsp. pepper
 - 2 cups hot water
 - ¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped
1. Defrost okra slightly and place in a bowl. Pour vinegar over. Let it sit, mixing occasionally, while you prepare the sauce.
 2. Heat oil in a 10-inch heavy skillet over moderately high heat. Saute onion until soft, about 3-5 minutes. Add garlic and sauté until fragrant, about 10 seconds. Add tomato sauce, jalapeno (if using), salt, pepper and 2 cups hot water. Cook sauce over medium heat until slightly thickened, about 10-15 minutes.
 3. Strain okra and add to tomato sauce with the chopped parsley. Cook, gently stirring, until okra is tender, about 5 minutes.
 4. Discard jalapeno, if using.