DIRECT · EASY

Kamado escalivada with smoked peppers and aubergine

Red pepper, aubergine and onion roasted whole over live coals until the skin chars black, then peeled and dressed with nothing but extra-virgin olive oil and flaky salt.



PREP	COOK	SERVINGS	TEMPERATURE
15 min	45 min	4	230 °C

Ingredients

- **3 ud** large fleshy red peppers
- **2 ud** large onions in their skin (Figueres or sweet variety)
- **1 diente** raw garlic clove, thinly slivered (optional)
- **1 pizca** flaky sea salt, Maldon-style (to finish)
- **2 ud** medium aubergines (ideally purple, not too large)
- **4 cda** extra-virgin olive oil (Comunidad Valenciana), to dress
- **1 cdita** mild wine or sherry vinegar (optional)
- **1 pizca** chopped fresh parsley (optional, to finish)

Method

1 LIGHT AND STABILISE AT 230°C, DIRECT

Light the kamado for direct cooking, no deflector, grate at standard height. Open the bottom damper halfway and the top vent to about a third, and let the ceramic settle at 230°C for 15 minutes. You want strong but not infernal heat: above 280°C the skin burns before the flesh cooks through.

2 PREP THE WHOLE VEGETABLES

Do not peel anything and do not oil them yet. Wash and dry the peppers, aubergines and onions. Pierce the aubergines 3-4 times with a skewer or thin knife so steam escapes and they do not burst over the coals. Leave the onion in its outer skin: it acts as protection and gets discarded later.

3 STAGGER THE LOAD BY COOKING TIME

Start with the onions, the slowest (40-45 min), placing them toward one side of the grate. At 15 minutes add the red peppers (25-30 min). At 20 minutes add the aubergines (20-25 min). That way everything finishes roughly together at around the 45-minute mark.

4 TURN TO CHAR EVERY SIDE

Turn the peppers every 6-7 minutes with tongs until the skin is black and blistered on all four sides. Turn the aubergine a couple of times; it is ready when it deflates and feels soft to the squeeze. The onion blackens outside and softens within; do not be put off by how burnt it looks.

5 SWEAT 15 MINUTES, COVERED

As each one is done, move it to a large bowl covered with film, or into a sealed bag. Let them sweat for 15 minutes. The steam they release lifts the skin from the flesh and turns peeling into a matter of seconds. This is the step that separates a clean escalivada from a fight with stuck skin.

6 PEEL WITHOUT WATER, KEEP THE JUICES

Peel with your fingers, never under the tap: water washes away the smoky aroma. Remove the black skin, seeds and stalk from the peppers. Skin the aubergine and discard the end. Take the burnt outer layers off the onion. Strain and keep the juice from the bowl: it is liquid gold for the dressing.

7 TEAR INTO STRIPS BY HAND

Tear the peppers into strips lengthwise along their natural ribs, by hand rather than knife (a knife crushes and draws out water). Aubergine into strips or rough pieces. Onion into wedges or petals. Lay it all out on a flat platter, mixed or arranged by colour if you want presentation.

8 DRESS WITH OLIVE OIL AND REST

Drizzle with a generous pour of Valencian olive oil and the reserved juices, flaky salt and, if you like, slivers of raw garlic and a thread of vinegar. Let it rest at least 20-30 minutes at room temperature so the flavours settle. Serve warm or at room temperature, with parsley on top. It is even better the next day.

Editor's tips

- Vegetables go on whole, dry and WITHOUT oil. Brushing them with oil first only triggers flare-ups that char the skin before the inside cooks. Oil is for the end, once peeled — there, be generous and use the good stuff.
- Do not rush the colour: the skin must go fully black and blistered, not golden. That surface char is what brings the smoky flavour and, crucially, what later peels away clean. A merely toasted skin sticks and turns bitter.
- A couple of olive-wood chunks among the coals lift the dish: olive gives a mild, sweet, very Mediterranean smoke that suits the vegetables without overpowering them. Strong woods like mesquite or hickory are overkill here — they would kill the pepper's sweetness.

Gear for this recipe

Big Green Egg Large

The Large gives a roomy grate to roast whole peppers, aubergine and onion direct at 230 °C for 4.

mikamado.es/en/kamados/big-green-egg-large

Smokey Olive Wood Olive Wood Chunks 1.5 kg

Olive wood chunks for a veil of Mediterranean smoke while the vegetables char.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/smokey-olive-wood-olive-chunks-1-5kg

Kamado Joe Big Block XL lump charcoal 9.1 kg

Clean lump charcoal to reach 230 °C of direct heat.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/kamado-joe-big-block-xl-lump

Weber Precision Tongs 46 cm (6760)

Turn the whole vegetables over the embers until the skin is black all over.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/weber-pinza-precision-46

Full recipe at: mikamado.es/en/recetas/escalivada-kamado-pimientos-berenjena

As an Amazon Associate, mikamado.es earns from qualifying purchases. At no extra cost to you.