Summer Veggie Tomato Sauce

Ingredients:
1 eggplant, cut into 1-inch pieces
1 zucchini, sliced into ¼-inch-thick rounds
2 onions, red or yellow sliced
1 red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded and diced
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 pint of grape or cherry tomatoes or 3-4 tomatoes, diced
1-28oz can of crushed tomato sauce
red pepper flakes, to taste, optional
1 cup loosely packed basil leaves, torn
Parmesan cheese, grated, as needed, optional
Salt & pepper to taste
*Serve on top of cooked pasta

Directions:
1. Toss eggplant with 1 teaspoon of the salt and drain in a colander for 30 minutes. Pat dry with a paper towel, set aside.
2. In a large heavy-bottomed pot over medium-high heat, add 2 tablespoons of the olive oil. When the oil is hot, add eggplant and cook, stirring often, until golden, 8 to 10 minutes, adding more oil as needed to prevent sticking. Remove eggplant and set aside in a medium bowl.
3. Add 1 tablespoons of the olive oil to the pot and cook the zucchini until golden but not completely tender, 2 to 4 minutes. Remove and transfer to the bowl with the eggplant.
4. In the same pot heat ¼ cup of the oil over medium heat. Add onions and peppers. Cook until softened, about 10 to 15 minutes. Add garlic/red pepper flakes if using, cook for 30 seconds.
5. Add grape or diced tomatoes and reduce heat to medium low. Cook for 8 to 10 minutes. Add reserved eggplant, zucchini and grape tomatoes and canned crushed tomatoes. Stir well. Season with salt, cover pot and reduce the heat to low. Cook until all the vegetables have softened, 15-20 minutes.
6. Remove from the heat, adjust seasoning as needed. Serve over pasta. Top with fresh basil, parmesan cheese and enjoy!

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