

🌱🧄 This week's recipe, my new Italian cooking guide, and a summer flavor tip. 📧 Forwarded this? Subscribe below to get it straight to your inbox!

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Hi ,

June feels like the perfect time to lean into the flavors of Sicily and the beautiful sweet-tangy balance — *agrodolce* — that makes simple vegetables taste unforgettable.

This week, I'm revisiting one of my favorite warm-weather recipes: **Caponata**.

I've been thinking about caponata lately after watching Stanley Tucci travel through Italy in his series, celebrating the regional dishes that tell the story of a place. It reminded me just how special this dish is, and why I keep coming back to this humble Sicilian classic.

I've eaten caponata hot, room temperature, and cold — and honestly, I love it every way.



## Coming in July

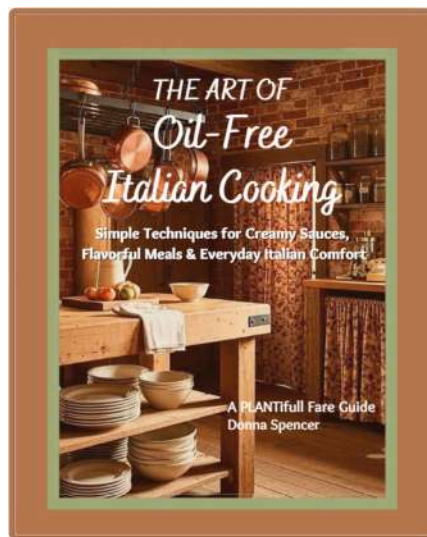
From **July 3–10**, I'll be contributing a brand-new teaching guide to the upcoming *Plant-Based Bundle*:

### **The Art of Oil-Free Italian Cooking**

*Simple Techniques for Creamy Sauces, Flavorful Meals & Everyday Italian Comfort*

This guide is over *60 pages* and brings together so much of what I love teaching most: how to build flavor without oil, create creaminess without dairy, use pasta water with intention, make satisfying sauces, and bring everyday Italian comfort food into a whole-food, plant-based kitchen.

This bundle is similar in spirit to Chef AJ's Vegan Health Bundle, but offered through a different plant-based organization. I'll share more details as we get closer, but I wanted you to know it is coming.



### Recipe to Try This Week

Caponata is a classic Sicilian eggplant dish made with tender vegetables, tomatoes, capers, olives, raisins, and vinegar for that signature agrodolce flavor — a little sweet, a little tangy, and deeply savory.

Traditionally, caponata is made with quite a bit of olive oil, but my version keeps the same rustic spirit while making it whole-food, plant-based and oil-free.



It is wonderful served warm, room temperature, or chilled, which makes it perfect for summer meals, make-ahead lunches, or an easy appetizer with crusty bread — my personal favorite.

It is one of those dishes that tastes even better after it rests, giving the flavors time to meld into something rich, bright, and deeply satisfying.

👉 [Get the recipe.](#)



### Kitchen Tip: Build Flavor in Layers

One of the ideas I teach in *The Art of Oil-Free Italian Cooking* is that **flavor has structure**.

In Italian cooking, great flavor rarely comes from one ingredient. It comes from layers: aromatics, vegetables, tomatoes, herbs, acid, saltiness, sweetness, and time.



Caponata is a perfect example.

- ✓ Eggplant gives the dish body.
- ✓ Tomatoes bring softness and sweetness.
- ✓ Capers and olives add salty depth.
- ✓ Raisins add a little sweetness.
- ✓ Vinegar brings the bright, tangy finish that makes the whole dish come alive.

When you are cooking without oil, this kind of layering matters even more. Instead of relying on oil for richness, you build flavor through technique, balance, and patience.

That is exactly the kind of everyday Italian cooking I'll be teaching more of in my new guide coming in July.



## Mark Your Calendar

- June 30 ✨ Live cooking demo with *Plant-Based Support* to share recipes from our [Purely Plant-Base Cheese](#) cookbook.
- July 11 ✨ Live cooking demo with Linda Tyler on "Chef AJ Live" to share recipes from our [Purely Plant-Base Cheese](#) cookbook.
- July 3-10 ✨ The Plant-Based Bundle launches with my contribution of *The Art of Oil-Free Italian Cooking*.

I hope your summer is off to a great start. I am so grateful you are here cooking along with me.

With love from my kitchen to yours,  
*Donna*

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## Ready to start?

My goal is to inspire **you** to embrace a plant-fueled lifestyle for a healthier, more vibrant life.

Tell me what classes interest you, or grab a few helpful freebies—and don't forget a little flavor boost with my favorite kitchen ingredient, California Balsamic vinegars!



**Cooking Class Interest**  
Tell me what classes you'd like to see



## Free Salad Dressing Recipes

Oil- & dairy-free inspiration



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