

**It's been all over the news.** Hurricane season is up and running fast in the Atlantic. From the Caribbean over to Texas and up to Maine, we are all ears when it comes to storm warnings. Last week, Florence unleashed her fury on the southern Atlantic coast. One of the early forecast models suggested she might hug the coast and head north. Lucky for us, she decided to go inland. I'm sure Ohio is lovely this time of year.

**Spared for now,** let's not forget that somewhere out there in the Atlantic, Helene (not Helen), Isaac and Joyce are swirling around. In spite of our northern location, New England is not immune to hurricanes. Although, they are admittedly few and far between. Most blow themselves out before they can reach us.

**Not so the Great New England Hurricane of 1938;** my dad still talks about that one. He even has a book about it somewhere. With 140 mile per hour wind gusts, it unleashed its wrath on every state in New England. Hundreds died, thousands were injured and damages were in the hundreds of millions. More recently, Irene wreaked havoc in New England, most particularly Vermont. Sandy did a number on New York and gave us a bit of rain and wind as well. Lucky for us, last year's deadly trio of Harvey, Irma and Maria stayed to the south.

**I admit as a small child,** hurricanes seemed terribly exciting. In those days, we spent August on Cape Cod. While I can't verify, I suspect that my sister Brenda and I labeled any downpour with the least bit of wind a hurricane. After all, rain is boring but a hurricane – that's something to talk about.

**One rainy August afternoon,** Brenda and I were encamped on the porch with paper dolls and sticker books. It didn't take long for boredom to set in. The air was hot and muggy so we talked Mom into letting go outside. It wasn't that difficult a negotiation. Stuck in a ramshackle cottage with two bored little girls – of course, she said yes. I suppose she would have turned us down if we'd tried to go out in the Great New England Hurricane. However, we hadn't been born yet. Heck, my parents hadn't even met, let alone finished elementary school in 1938.

**Anyway, Brenda and I gleefully** threw on our swimsuits, ran outside and danced around. I believe loud and joyous singing was involved but I don't remember the tune. I cannot speak for Brenda but I, for one, felt wonderfully adventurous. While the street was more or less empty, most of the porches were filled with bored vacationers.

**They sat and watched two silly little girls** giggle, dance and sing. I'm sure they were jealous. While they huddled with their paperbacks and puzzles, we were the only ones brave enough to defy the hurricane. It didn't matter that, at most, it was the last vestiges of some minor tropical storm. It didn't matter then and it still doesn't. As far as I'm concerned, my sister and I splashed, danced and sang in the street during a hurricane. That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

Here's a toast to sunny days and clear nights. Bon appétit!



## Grilled Ratatouille

*A delicious end of summer dish. You can even make it if the power goes out. Enjoy!*

Serves 8

1-2 red bell peppers, seeds and ribs removed and roughly chopped  
 1 large red onion, roughly chopped  
 Olive oil  
 Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper  
 4 cloves garlic, minced  
 1 pound cherry tomatoes  
 2 eggplants (about 2 pounds), sliced about 3/4-inch thick  
 3-4 zucchini (about 1 1/2 pounds), trimmed and cut in half lengthwise  
 2-3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar  
 2-3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
 1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves  
 1/4 cup finely chopped fresh basil  
 1/4 cup finely chopped fresh parsley

Preheat the grill to high.

Put the peppers and onion in a bowl, drizzle with a little olive oil, season with salt and pepper and toss to coat. Working in batches if necessary, put the vegetables in a grill basket and grill for 6-8 minutes, stirring from time to time.

Remove the vegetables from the grill basket and return them to the bowl. Add the garlic to the warm vegetables and toss to combine.

Put the tomatoes in a bowl, drizzle with a little olive oil, season with salt and pepper and toss to coat. Working in batches if necessary, put the tomatoes in a grill basket and grill for 4-6 minutes, stirring from time to time. Add the tomatoes to the peppers and onion.

Brush the eggplant and zucchini slices with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Grill the eggplant and zucchini for 4 to 6 minutes per side or until nicely browned and tender.

Remove the vegetables from the grill. As soon as they are cool enough to handle, chop the veggies in bite-size pieces. Add them to the tomatoes, peppers and onion. Drizzle with balsamic vinegar and extra virgin olive oil, sprinkle with herbs and toss to combine.

Serve warm or at room temperature.

*Can be prepared in advance, covered and refrigerated. Bring to room temperature before serving.*

