Spicy Cheesy Charred Eggplant Dip with Basil Oil

Ingredients

For the dip:
1 pint of ají dulce peppers (or 1-2 red bell peppers)
1 head of garlic
2 lbs of fairy tale or Chinese eggplant, cut vertically
3 cayenne peppers (or 1/2 tbsp cayenne powder)
1 block of feta (about 5 oz)
1 T vinegar
1/2 T salt
1/2 cup olive oil

For the basil oil:
1 large bunch of basil
1 cup olive oil
1 tsp salt

For dipping:
Your favorite bread and veggies

Method

Process: For the dip:
Pan-roast the peppers and garlic in a small cast iron until soft and charred. Keep the garlic in their peels. Once you're done charring, remove the garlic from the peels. Char both sides of the eggplant in a large pan with oil. You want the eggplant to be a deep brown color and soften to the point that you could mush it with your fingers.

You can also do this on the grill if you have one. Add all ingredients to a food processor, except for the olive oil, which you'll slowly add into the mouth of the food processor to incorporate as it blends. Blend until the base is smooth, but the dip still has a little texture.

For the basil oil: Combine fresh basil, olive oil, and salt in a high-speed blender. Blend until fully combined and strain.

Transfer the dip to a serving bowl and drizzle with basil oil. Serve with toasted bread and your favorite crudités. Enjoy!

Recipe by Garden Chef Natalie Firmin-Chavez