

Eggplant ParmigianaV

This great vegetarian dish is delicious served with Salsa Verde (page 234) and a vegetable side (pages 158–187) – there’s plenty of time to make these while your parmigiana is in the oven, and the complete package is definitely worth it. It is of course seasonal, as eggplant can be quite pricey at certain times of the year, but you could always use zucchini or portobello mushrooms instead.

Serves	4
Prep time	15 minutes
Cook time	50 minutes
Difficulty	●●●
Per serve	
Carbs	20.2 g
Protein	16.0 g
Fat	21.1 g
Energy	351 Cal

INGREDIENTS

For the sauce:

- 2 tbsp olive oil,
plus more as required
- 2 onions, diced
- 2 or more cloves garlic,
chopped or crushed
- 400 g (2 cans) chopped tomatoes
- 1 tsp dried oregano

To assemble:

- 2 medium-sized eggplants
- 2 tbsp olive oil
(plus more as needed)
- 1 cup grated cheese
(Parmesan, Grana Padano,
Pecorino, even a strong cheddar)
- small handful of basil leaves
(optional)
- 6–8 ripe tomatoes, sliced

METHOD

Pre-heat the oven to 180°C fan (200°C regular). Have a 20 cm x 20 cm casserole dish ready.

For the sauce, place the oil in a large pot over a medium heat. Add the onion, garlic and a pinch of salt (to help the onions soften), turn the heat down and cook on medium to low, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes before adding the canned tomatoes. Continue to cook for 20 minutes, then season with salt, freshly ground black pepper and the oregano. Set aside. If you wish, you can blend the sauce for a smoother consistency.

Line a large plate with paper towels. Slice the eggplants lengthways into slices 1 cm thick. Heat the olive oil in a large frying pan over a medium-high heat. When hot, carefully place some eggplant slices into the pan and cook briefly on each side until the eggplant begins to soften. Transfer to the lined plate to drain off excess oil. Cook the remaining slices the same way, adding more oil as necessary.

To assemble, place a layer of eggplant (about one-third of it) in the baking dish and spoon over one-third of the tomato sauce in a thin layer. Sprinkle with one-third of the cheese and half the basil (if using). Repeat these layers (eggplant, tomato sauce, cheese, basil), then finish with a final layer of eggplant topped with tomato sauce. Lay the sliced tomatoes evenly over the top and sprinkle with the remaining cheese. (There’s no basil on the top layer, because it burns.)

Bake for 15–20 minutes until the cheese is glazed, the eggplant is soft and the sauce is bubbling. While the parmigiana is cooking, make your Salsa Verde and vegetable accompaniment.

Serve as soon as the parmigiana is ready.

