

Eggcellent Eggplant

Kia ora koutou,

Eggplants, also known as aubergines, are in season now and are a quick and easy vegetable option. Did you know an eggplant is actually a fruit? They aren't always purple either: there are white, green, black, and even red varieties.

Eggplant are used in various traditional recipes in many countries. For example, Greece – moussaka, France – ratatouille, India – baingan bharta, and Turkey – imam bayildi. Interestingly all these recipes use tomato to add flavour too!



Cheesy Eggplant Bake – a yummy vegetable as a side dish or to serve as a light meal.

- 1 large or 2 small eggplants
- 1-2 cups grated edam cheese
- 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- ¼ cup breadcrumbs
- 1 ½ cup spinach leaves or frozen spinach
- ¼ cup finely grated parmesan cheese (optional)
- 1 can diced tomatoes

1. Slice the eggplant into roughly 1cm thick circles and place on a lined baking tray.
2. Brush with oil and put into the oven on grill function, when the eggplant has browned turn and repeat.
3. Remove from the oven and turn the oven to bake at 180°C
4. Layer half of the eggplant slices on an oven-proof dish, scatter the spinach leaves on top and pour over the canned tomatoes. Sprinkle over half of the cheese and top with the remaining eggplant slices. Sprinkle with breadcrumbs and the remaining cheese.
5. Bake for 30 – 35 minutes.

To make eggplant bake a full balanced meal: Add cooked potato slices (e.g. boiled slices or very lightly fried with 1 teaspoon oil) and a chickpea falafel or lentil patty to the stack. Alternatively have your bake (above recipe) with a meat and potato serving on the side.

Using some of the ingredients above, you can also make **stuffed eggplant**

- 2 eggplants
- 1 tablespoon Moroccan seasoning
- 2 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 1 can of diced tomatoes
- 500g beef mince
- 2 tablespoon breadcrumbs

1. Preheat oven to 200°C.
2. Halve the eggplant lengthways, using a small knife or spoon, remove the central flesh and chop the flesh into roughly 2cm cubes.
3. Place eggplant halves onto a baking tray with cut side up, brush with oil and bake for 10 – 15 minutes until tender.
4. Meanwhile, heat 2 tablespoon of oil in a frying pan, cook the chopped eggplant flesh for 3-5 minutes until golden and tender. Remove from pan and set aside.
5. Using the same pan, heat 1 tablespoon of oil, add the garlic and mince. Cook for 4-5 minutes until well browned. Return eggplant to pan with seasoning. Stir in the canned tomatoes and season to taste.
6. Fill eggplant halves with mince mixture. Sprinkle with breadcrumbs then bake for 25 – 30 minutes.

Ngā mihi nui,
Beyning