

The DISH



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If there is one thing I may have over-planted in my garden this year it is eggplant. Last year I planted one eggplant. We found out we loved the Garlic Parmesan Baked Eggplant recipe below and so did the rest of our family. So, this year I grabbed a four-pack of eggplant and, at the end of the planting season, found two more eggplant. Oh my goodness, I bet one of my plants has 15 beautiful purple eggplants on it — and actually all six of my plants are loaded. So, even though I've made the Garlic Parmesan Baked Eggplant several times I'm definitely looking for more options. I just hate letting any garden produce go to waste.

Garlic Parmesan Baked Eggplant

- 1 large eggplant
- 6 Tbsp. butter, melted
- 1 cup bread crumbs
- ¼ cup shredded Parmesan cheese
- ¼ tsp. smoked paprika
- ½ tsp. garlic powder
- ½ tsp. Italian seasoning

Start by preparing the eggplant: wash the eggplant and trim off the green end. You can peel the skin if you like. Next, slice eggplant into half-inch disks. (I cut mine a little thinner. I like them crispy.) Place all disks in colander or cooling rack set over baking sheet, sprinkle with salt and let sit for at least 30 minutes.

Next, melt butter in a bowl. Mix bread crumbs, spices and Parmesan cheese in another bowl. Dip each eggplant disk into butter first, then breading mixture. Place on aluminum foil or parchment paper lined baking sheet.

Bake in 400 degree oven for 15 minutes, then flip each disk and bake for another 7 minutes. The eggplant should be golden brown and the breading crispy. Serve as side dish, appetizer or use in eggplant Parmesan.

Cheesy Pull-Apart Garlic 'Bread' Eggplant

- 2 eggplants
- 1 cup grated mozzarella
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves
- 4 Tbsp. fresh cilantro
- Salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Wash the eggplant and dry with a towel or absorbent paper.

In a mixing bowl, add the olive oil, chopped cilantro and finely crushed garlic. Adjust with salt and pepper, if you like.

Using a small and sharp knife, cut lines lengthwise into the eggplant but don't cut all the way through

the eggplant as you would do for classic garlic bread. Now cut lines, perpendicularly, to make cubes. Same here, don't cut all the way through, as you don't want to cut the bottom of the eggplant.

Use your finger to gently open the cracks between each eggplant cube and using a teaspoon, insert the garlic oil mixture into each crack. You can also use a silicone pastry brush. It helps spread the mixture to the bottom of each crack and gets the flavors all around the eggplant.

Proceed the same way to insert the grated cheese. It's a bit of a messy process and you have to proceed carefully, gently stuffing each crack with cheese without breaking the eggplant cubes.

Place the stuffed eggplant onto a long piece of thick aluminum foil paper and wrap the eggplant in the foil. Leave some space on the top not to let the foil stick to the melting cheese. Close well as you want to keep the moisture into the foil paper papillote.

Bake for 20-25 minutes or until the eggplant is soft and all the cheese is melted and runny. Remove from the oven and serve on a plate. Let cool for 5 minutes before eating, as it will be very hot.

You can prepare these eggplants 24 hours before and bake them before serving. Stuff the eggplant, wrap it in foil and store it in the refrigerator until needed.

Stuffed Eggplant Parm

- 1½ cups marinara, divided
- 2 medium eggplants, halved
- 1 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup chopped tomatoes
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 2½ cups shredded mozzarella,

- divided
- ¼ cup freshly grated Parmesan
- ¼ cup Italian bread crumbs
- Freshly sliced basil, for garnish

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spread 1 cup of marinara over the bottom of a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Using a spoon, hollow out eggplants, leaving about a half-inch thick border around skin to create a boat; transfer to baking dish. Roughly chop scooped-out eggplant flesh.

In a large skillet over medium heat, heat oil. Add onion and cook until soft, 5 minutes. Stir in chopped eggplant and season with oregano, salt and pepper. Cook, stirring often, until golden and tender, 3 to 4 minutes. Add garlic and cook until fragrant, 1 minute.

Transfer mixture to a bowl and add tomatoes, egg, 1 cup of mozzarella and remaining ½ cup marinara. Mix until just combined, then scoop into eggplant boats. Top with remaining 1 cup mozzarella, Parmesan and bread crumbs.

Bake until eggplants are tender and cheese is golden, about 50 minutes. Garnish with basil before serving.

Grilled Eggplant with Feta and Herbs

- 2 large eggplants, cut in uniform slices ¾-inch thick
- 2 tsp. salt, for salting eggplant
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil, for brushing on eggplant
- ¼ cup chopped fresh mint
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- ½ cup crumbled feta (or more)
- VINAIGRETTE:
- 1 tsp. garlic puree or finely minced garlic
- ½ tsp. salt
- 3 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 2 Tbsp. red onion, finely minced
- ½ tsp. ground cumin (or a little more)
- Generous pinch Aleppo pepper (or use cayenne pepper)
- 1 tsp. all-purpose seasoning
- 6 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil

Cut both ends off the eggplants and cut into slices ¾-inch thick.

Take the cut eggplant and lay it out on paper towels and sprinkle with salt. Let the eggplant sit about 20 minutes or until you see beads of water released.

Then turn over and sprinkle with salt and let sit about 20 minutes more on the second side. When you've turned the eggplant over and salted it the second time, start to preheat gas or charcoal barbecue grill to medium high.

While eggplant sits, put garlic, salt, lemon juice and shallots or red onion into food processor and pulse until all ingredients are well

combined, then let sit for 10 minutes. After 10 minutes, put mixture in small bowl, stir in ground cumin, Aleppo pepper or cayenne and all-purpose seasoning, then whisk in olive oil.

Wash fresh herbs in a salad spinner, if needed, and finely chop with a large knife. Crumble feta into a small bowl.

After eggplant has been sitting with salt for the second 20 minutes, wipe the water (and salt) away from the eggplant with a dry paper towel and put it on a baking sheet. Brush eggplant with olive oil on both sides.

Lay eggplant slices on the grill. If you want criss-cross grill marks, grill the eggplant about 3-4 minutes on the first side, then lift up the edge to see if the grill marks are dark enough. When you see good grill marks, rotate each piece of eggplant and cook about 3-4 minutes more. Turn eggplant over and cook 3-4 minutes more on the second side, or until it's done to your liking.

Arrange eggplant on a serving tray or baking sheet, drizzle with garlic-cumin vinaigrette and sprinkle with crumbled feta and herbs.

Eggplant Tomato Pie

- 1 large eggplant
- 6 Roma tomatoes, sliced into ½-inch rounds
- 1 medium red onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 cup panko bread crumbs
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 egg
- 3 Tbsp. butter, melted
- 1 Tbsp. prepared pesto
- 4 oz. mozzarella cheese, shredded
- Fresh chopped, flat-leafed, Italian parsley
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Peel and cube eggplant and boil in salted water until soft, about 10 minutes.

While eggplant is cooking, saute onions and garlic over medium heat until translucent and fragrant, being careful not to burn the garlic, then set aside.

When eggplant is soft, drain water and mash. To eggplant mash, add sauteed onion, garlic, bread crumbs, Parmesan, egg, melted butter, pesto and mix well.

Lubricate the pie pan with non-stick cooking spray. Layer on the bottom of the pan with tomato slices. Add eggplant mixture. Top mixture with the rest of the tomatoes. Add shredded mozzarella and sprinkle with the fresh parsley.

Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes or until golden brown.