



EGGPLANT CASSEROLE

A zingy variation on a Middle Eastern classic

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories 485, Protein 14g, Carbs 82g, Fat 12g

Cooking process and additional ingredients added at home will affect the total value.

Preparation Time: 10 min, **Cooking Time:** 55 min



INGREDIENTS

Eggplant

Onion, Garlic

Tomatoes

Sour Pomegranate Molasses

Tomato Paste

Olive Oil

Black Pepper & Salt

Pita Bread for Serving

METHOD

Original recipe calls for deep frying the eggplant. This provides authentic taste, however, it requires additional amount of oil (not provided) and will increase the calories count. Two alternatives are provided; oven baking and air frying so feel free to use any of the three.

1. Preheat oven to 180°C. If not deep frying, toss eggplant with half the oil.
2. For eggplant cooking;
 - **Oven cooked eggplant:** Lay the slices flat on **shallow baking tin** or **metal oven tray lined** with parchment paper in a single layer without overlapping. Place the tray on the middle rack in the hot oven & bake the eggplant for 12 min, or until bottom part is golden. Turn on the other side & continue baking them for another 12 min until lightly caramelized on the other side & tender in middle. Take out & set aside.
 - **Air fried eggplant:** Check your fryer instructions for cooking vegetables, cook as instructed. Usually cook at 180°C for about 7 min, check, shake the basket then repeat if needed. When cooked as desired, remove & set aside. Avoid over cooking.
3. Dissolve the tomato paste & pomegranate molasses in measured warm water (2 persons= 1 cup, 4 persons=2 cups, 6 persons=3 cups). Add ¼ tsp each salt & pepper & stir to homogenize. Check seasoning & adjust but remember as the sauce reduces flavors will intensify.
4. Place a skillet over medium heat, add remaining oil, when hot add the onions, sauté until they start to turn translucent, add the whole garlic & a dash of each salt & pepper.
5. Sauté for 1 min or so, add the crushed garlic & stir for 30 seconds.
6. Add dissolved sauce to the pan, bring to boil & simmer for 2 min, remove from heat.
7. Spread about 2 TBS of sauce to base of a rectangular deep baking dish, line with single layer of cooked eggplant, add more sauce, then another layer of eggplant.
8. Alternate until all ingredients are used.
9. Top last layer with sliced tomatoes & bake in hot oven for 30 min or until thick & bubbly
10. Remove from oven and allow to cool slightly (some people prefer it room temperature or even cold). Serve with pita bread (or white rice).