



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:** 50 min



INGREDIENTS

Eggplant

Onion

Garlic

Tomatoes

Sour Pomegranate Molasses

Tomato Paste

Sunflower 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. We are providing two alternatives; oven baking and air frying so feel free to use any of the three.

1. Wash the eggplant, discard green top and about ¼ cm from bottom. Slice lengthwise about 1 cm thick leaving the skin on. Place in a basin, sprinkle with 1 tsp salt and rub well. Stand for 5 min or so. A brownish liquid will seep out.
2. Discard liquid, give the eggplants a quick wash and tap dry with kitchen towel.
3. Preheat oven to 180°C.
4. If not deep frying, toss eggplant with half the oil.
5. For eggplant cooking;
 - **Oven cooked eggplant:** Lay the slices flat on baking 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 10-12 min, or until bottom part is golden. Turn on the other side & continue baking them for another 10-12 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.
6. Dissolve the tomato paste & pomegranate molasses in measured warm water add ¼ tsp each salt & pepper & stir to homogenize. Check seasoning & adjust but remember as the sauce reduces flavors will intensify.
7. 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 salt & pepper sauté for 1 min or so, add the crushed garlic & fry for 30 seconds.
8. Add the dissolved sauce, bring to boil & simmer for 2 min. spread about 2 TBS of the sauce to the base of a rectangular deep baking dish, line with single layer of fried eggplant add more sauce, alternate until all ingredients are used.
9. Top with sliced tomatoes and bake in oven for 30 min or until thick and 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).