

Eggplant Parmesan

Serves 4+

Ingredients

2-3 medium size eggplants

Salt

¼ cup parmesan cheese, grated

2 cups, mozzarella cheese, shredded or torn

8 eggs

1 cup all purpose flour

2 cups panko bread crumbs

1 tsp oregano or thyme powder, if breadcrumbs are not pre seasoned

Oil for frying

3 cups favorite tomato sauce

Directions

1. We need to pull moisture from the eggplant and press the slices before frying. Slice the eggplants into 1/2 inch strips by removing the stem and slicing from top to bottom. Heavily salt the eggplant slices to help remove excess moisture and bitter flavors. Using heavy dinner plates you will layer the salted eggplant slices with napkins to catch the moisture. Layer paper napkins on a dinner plate. Cover the dinner plate with paper napkins. Top the napkins with a single layer of salted eggplant. Top the eggplant with another layer of napkins followed by another heavy dinner plate. Repeat the process (plate, napkin, eggplant, napkin, plate) until all of the eggplant slices are compressed under the plates with a final plate on top. Microwave this stack of plates for 3 minutes. Rotate the top plates to the bottom and microwave for another 2 minutes. Allow to cool and rest for 5 minutes before proceeding.
 - a. Alternatively, you can roast the salted eggplant slice in a 350F oven for 30 minutes and continue with the process below.
2. Press the now steamed eggplant between two napkins to pull out excess moisture. Pressing will also condense the eggplant slice for a more meaty texture. Proceed with all of the eggplant slices.
3. It's time to bread the eggplant slices for deep frying. Prepare a large bowl for each, flour, whisked egg, and panko breadcrumbs. Whisk the eggs very well so the eggs do not clump. Add the dried oregano or thyme to the breadcrumbs if they are not pre seasoned. Coat each slice of eggplant in the following order: flour, egg, breadcrumbs. Be sure to press the eggplant into the breadcrumbs heavily on both sides. Set aside on a sheet tray for frying.
4. Prepare a pot or cast iron for deep frying at 300F. Frying at this lower temperature leads to less oil absorption and a crispier texture. Fry 2 or 3 slices of eggplant at a time until

golden brown and drain on a sheet tray lined with paper napkins. Allow the temperature of the oil to rise to 300F before frying the next batch.

5. Preheat the oven to 350F. It's time to build the eggplant parmesan in a 13x9" pan or similar. Stack the eggplant like fallen dominoes in the pan. Sporadically top the eggplant with the tomato sauce. Top with the mozzarella and parmesan cheeses. Cook in the oven for 20 minutes or so until the cheese is melted.
6. Serve with a fresh side like a spinach and red onion salad.

Context

What's not up for debate? The best part of the dish is where the fried breading soaks up the sweet tomato sauce.

American-style Eggplant Parmesan is all about the best fried piece of eggplant possible. Frying these eggplant steaks (instead of rounds) makes for less work and more crunch!

Zinfandel and tomato sauce work so well together because, well because! Both are fruity and sweet, tangy and delicious, and California, right?!

Eggplant gets a bad rap. But that's only the case if you don't give it the attention it deserves. It's like no wine on a Thursday night. You are gunna have a bad time!