



## *Garden Fresh Farm Recipes*

# Eggplant Parmesan

Eggplant parmesan is one of those great Italian comfort foods—a layered casserole much like lasagna but with slices of globe eggplant taking the place of pasta.

The two things to keep in mind when cooking eggplant, especially firm globe eggplants, is that not only do eggplants hold onto moisture, they also absorb oil like a sponge. So if you're not careful you can end up with something mushy and oily.

In this recipe, to tackle the first challenge we lightly salt the raw eggplant slices and let them sit out for a while. The salt helps draw moisture out of the eggplant. To deal with the oil absorption issue, instead of frying the breaded eggplant slices, we bake them in the oven, before assembling the casserole to be baked again.

The result? Wonderful! Cheesy, tomato-y eggplant parmesan that doesn't weigh you down with too much water or oil.

Yield: Serves 8

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### Ingredients:

2 1/4 lbs (about 2 large) eggplants  
1 teaspoon kosher salt  
1 Pint marinara sauce  
1 1/2 cups panko breadcrumbs  
1 1/4 cups grated Parmesan cheese, divided  
3/4 cup flour  
4 eggs, beaten (more if needed)  
1/4 cup olive oil (plus more to oil the sheet pans)  
1 1/2 pounds fresh mozzarella, sliced into 1/4-inch slices

### Directions:

**Slice and salt eggplant, let drain:** Slice the eggplants into 1/4-inch to 1/2-inch thick rounds. Lay the eggplant slices out on a rack over a rimmed sheet pan (or on several layers of paper towels).

Sprinkle both sides of the eggplant rounds lightly with salt. Let the eggplant rounds sit and release moisture for 2 hours.

Preheat the oven to 425°F.

Make breadcrumb Parmesan mixture, set up bowls for dredging with flour, egg, breadcrumbs: Combine 1 1/2 cups of panko with 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese, and place in a shallow bowl or rimmed dish



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Dredge eggplant rounds in flour, egg, breadcrumbs.

Place on oiled sheet pan. Drizzle a little oil over the top of each breaded eggplant round.

Place breaded prepared eggplant slices in the oven. Cook for 18 to 20 minutes at 425°F, turning the slices over at the half-way point, until they are nicely browned. Remove from oven, and let cool to touch.

Layer sauce, eggplant rounds, cheeses in casserole dish: Spread 1/2 cup of the marinara over the bottom of a 9x13-inch casserole dish. Place a third of the eggplant rounds in a single layer covering the marinara sauce on the bottom of the pan.

Layer half of the sliced mozzarella on top of the eggplant rounds. Sprinkle 1/3 cup of grated Parmesan cheese.

Place another third of the eggplant rounds over the cheese. Spread 1 cup of the marinara sauce over the eggplant rounds. Layer the rest of the sliced mozzarella over the sauce. Sprinkle with 1/3 cup of grated Parm.

Add the remaining eggplant in a single layer on top of the cheese. Top with the remaining marinara sauce and the remaining Parmesan.

Bake: Bake uncovered at 350°F for 35 minutes. Remove from oven and let sit for 10 minutes before cutting into to serve.

(Idea from: simplyrecipes)