

Roasted eggplant with tomato sauce

I make this dish without the tomato sauce. Instead, as the eggplant comes of the oven, I sprinkle it with a little red wine vinegar, torn basil leaves and topped garlic.

3-4 eggplants (aubergines)
salt
250 ml (9 fl oz / 1 cup) olive oil
½ quantity tomato pasta sauce (page 84)
50 g (1¾ oz / ½ cup) grated parmesan cheese
basil leaves

Cut the eggplants vertically or horizontally into thin (1.5 cm / ½ inch) slices. Layer the eggplant in a dish or colander, sprinkling each layer generously with salt, and leave for 1-2 hours. The salt will draw out the moisture and bitterness. Pat the eggplant dry with a tea towel (without rinsing).

Heat the oven to 220°C (425°F / Gas 7). Using a pastry brush, generously brush each slice of eggplant on both sides with the olive oil and place in a single layer on an oiled baking tray (if you don't have enough room or trays, cook the eggplant in batches). Bake on the lowest shelf of the oven for about 10 minutes, then turn them and cook for 5 minutes or until golden brown.

Arrange a layer of eggplant over a large serving plate, then spoon on some tomato sauce and spread evenly. Sprinkle with a little parmesan and some torn basil leaves. Repeat the layers until you've used up the ingredients. Delicious hot or cold.

Alternatively, put the eggplant in a baking dish. Repeat the method above, but when you've finished, mix a beaten egg with a cupful of tomato sauce, pour over the eggplant and bake at 180°C (350°F / Gas 4) for 40 minutes.

(Serves 6)

Leave eggplant
for 30 minutes with
salt -- not 2 hours.