

Eggplant

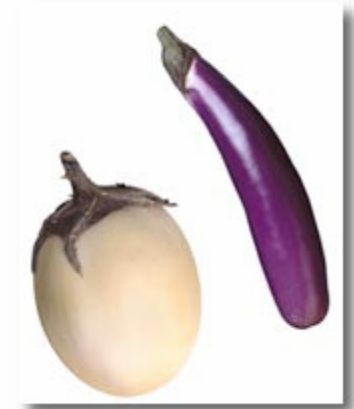
Health Benefits

Eggplant

- Have only a small percentage of calories from fat.
- Nice source of potassium, which tends to flush excess sodium from the body.
- Source of folate.

Storing

- Eggplants do not like cool temperatures and do not store well.
- If you must store them, wrap in plastic and store in fridge for 1-2 days.



Preparation and Serving

- Many cooks insist on salting and pressing (or just draining) the air and water out before cooking. Getting rid of the air means it will absorb less oil during cooking.
- Salting also reduces the water content which reduces the amount of water leached out into the dish.
- If you salt prior to cooking, rinse and pat dry to prevent excessive salt in the end product.
- Adjust the seasoning in the recipe to compensate for the salt remaining on the eggplant.

Cooking

- Eggplant tends to soak up oil like a sponge, so avoid sautéing in oil.
- Steam or bake to avoid adding fat and calories to your diet.
- Cook thoroughly.

Serve with:

- Mediterranean meats (lamb), vegetables, and seasonings.
- Zucchini, tomatoes, onions, chick-peas
- Garlic and parsley
- It is used in moussaka, curries, eggplant parmigiana, and ratatouille.

Vegetable Facts

Pesticide Use on Farm Crops

Pesticides are chemicals that are used to control pests that destroy crops. They are used in the production of most crops sold in the U.S. These chemicals may increase your risk for cancer or other chronic diseases and should be limited in your diet.

Organic food is produced by farmers who emphasize the use of renewable resources and the conservation of soil and water to enhance environmental quality for future generations.

Organic food is produced without using most conventional pesticides, petroleum-based fertilizers, bioengineering, or ionizing radiation.

Organic systems replenish and maintain soil fertility, eliminate the use of toxic and persistent pesticides and fertilizers, and build biologically diverse agriculture.

Recipes

Mexican Eggplant

1 medium eggplant
 salt
 olive oil
 1 (4 oz) can chopped green chilies,
 undrained or fresh chile peppers
 1 (4 oz) can sliced ripe olives, drained
 1 (15 oz) can tomato sauce
 or 4 large tomatoes
 ½ t ground cumin
 ¼ garlic
 2 cups grated Cheddar cheese, divided
 ½ cup breadcrumbs

1. Pell eggplant and cut into ½ inch slices. Sprinkles sides of slices with salt and refrigerate 30 to 60 min. Dry slices with paper towel. Brush sides with oil and place on baking sheet.

2. Bake at 450F for 30 min. Combine chiles and next 4 ingredients in medium saucepan. Bring to boil over medium heat. Reduce heat and simmer 15 min.

3. Place eggplant in a lightly greased casserole dish. Top with half of tomato mixture and 1 cup cheese. Sprinkle with breadcrumbs. Spread remainder of tomato sauce over breadcrumbs. Top with remaining 1 cup cheese.

4. Bake at 350F for 20 min.

Bibliography

Eggplant from the "Watch Your Garden Grow" series, University of Illinois Extension

Nutrition Advisor by Mark Bricklin and the Editors of Prevention Magazine

"Healing Food Pyramid: Fruits and Vegetables" by the University of Michigan Integrative Medicine Clinic

Today's Herbal Kitchen by Mary Gunderson

Local Foods Connection
Food Facts Sheet
Issue Twelve