

Eggplant Parmesan

3 or 4 large eggplant
6 eggs
1 ½ – 2 cups Parmesan cheese, divided
salt and pepper, to taste
1 recipe Simple tomato sauce
canola oil or pure olive oil for frying

Peel and slice the eggplant into about ¼-inch rounds.

Mix the eggs with about a cup of Parmesan cheese. Add about ¼ cup water. Batter should be fairly thick.

Heat the oil in a 6-quart *sauté* pan to very hot.

Dip the eggplant in the egg batter and put into the oil. Fry to fairly dark brown, turning halfway through.

Drain on brown paper bags in a single layer.

In a 9-inch x 12-inch pan, put a single layer of eggplant. Cut pieces to cover the bottom of the pan. Sprinkle with Parmesan. Repeat layers two times. (No sauce in between layers.)

When the fourth (the last) layer of eggplant is on, sprinkle with Parmesan. Top with sauce and more Parmesan

Bake 350°F for about 30 minutes.

Freezes great!

Disclaimer: The ingredients listed are only estimates and it varies every time I make this. I typically make several sizes to freeze for later. If you run out of egg batter before all the eggplant is dipped, just mix up some more.

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Giant Ricotta Meatballs

Makes about 2 dz. Meatballs

1 lb. 80/20 ground beef
1 lb. Ground pork or sausage
olive oil
1 onion, diced
3 cloves garlic, chopped
4 slices white bread
½ milk
1 cup ricotta cheese, drained (see note)
1/3 cup grated Parmesan
2 lg. Eggs
1/3 cup parsley, chopped
1 tbs. dried basil
1 tsp. dried oregano
salt
pepper

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place the bread in a bowl and pour the milk over and allow it to soak in. Saute the onions in the olive oil for a few minutes then add the garlic. Saute until the onions are soft. Transfer to a plate and allow to cool. In a large bowl combine the meat with the onion-garlic mixture, milk soaked bread, Parmesan, eggs, parsley, herbs, salt and pepper.

Make a small patty of meat and fry it in a pan. Taste it for salt and pepper. Adjust the seasoning if needed. Using a 1 oz or larger cookie scoop form the meatballs and place on a sheet pan lined with parchment paper or foil. Make sure you do not place the meatballs on the tray touching each other.

Bake the meatballs for 20-25 minutes. Remove the meatballs and transfer them to a waiting pot of Marinara Sauce. Continue to cook in the sauce for another 30 minutes or so.

Serve over pasta or in a meatball sub.

Note: To drain ricotta place the desired amount in a fine mesh strainer lined with damp cheese clothe. Cover with the excess cheese clothe and place over a bowl. Place bowl and strainer in the frig over night or for at least 8 hours. Gently unwrap drained ricotta and use as desired.

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Simple Tomato Sauce

Makes about 3 cups of sauce

In the summer and fall you can replace the canned tomatoes with fresh garden tomatoes. In the winter and spring when tomatoes are not at their best use a good quality whole plum tomato. The flavor will be better than that of the fresh you will find in the store.

2 shallots, minced

Pure olive oil

1 28 oz can whole plum tomatoes or 2 lbs fresh plum tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped

salt and pepper, to taste

1-2 Tbs. Balsamic vinegar

2 Tbs. Flat leaf parsley, chopped

Heat 2 Tbs olive oil in a sauce pan. Saute the shallots for 3-4 minutes. Add the tomatoes and bring to a simmer. If using canned tomatoes break them up with a spoon as they cook. Cook for 15 minutes and season with salt and pepper. Transfer sauce to a blender the puree until smooth. Return sauce to the pan and taste. Add 1 Tbs balsamic vinegar and taste again. You can add another Tbs of balsamic if needed.

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