



Eggplant Parmesan

From [Let's Eat](#), by Dan Pelosi

From Dan: As an Italian American, eating eggplant parmesan is as natural and frequent as breathing. This classic Italian dish might as well flow out of our sink faucets—that's how much consumption occurs. This version, like many of my recipes, is my take, based on all the recipes I grew up eating, most of which called for eggplant dredged in breadcrumbs, then fried up. I find breadcrumbs to be a bit heavy and grainy when they are smothered in all that marinara and cheese, so instead, I fry mine in a mix of egg and flour, which makes them super light and crunchy. I always fry some extra eggplant to snack on while making my parm, and that, my friend, is my hottest tip.

Serves 6

2 large globe eggplants

Kosher salt

1 cup all-purpose flour

2 large eggs

Extra-virgin olive oil, for frying

4 cups of store-bought marinara

2 cups freshly grated Parmesan cheese

16 ounces mozzarella cheese, thinly sliced

crusty bread/baguette (optional)

1. First, we need to sweat the eggplant. Trust the process, ignore the name. Line a rimmed sheet pan with paper towels and have more paper towels at the ready. Slice the eggplant into 1/2-inch-thick rounds and arrange a single layer of rounds on the towels. Salt both sides of the rounds, then add another layer of paper towels on top of them. Repeat with the remaining eggplant rounds until all are salted and tucked into bed, finishing with a layer of paper towels.

2. Place a second sheet pan on top of your layered eggplant slices, then place some heavy books or a skillet on top. This forces out excess water from the eggplant, preventing soggy eggplant parm. Leave your eggplant to sweat for at least 20 minutes or up to 1 hour. If you do it right, the paper towels will be totally wet when you pull off the layers. When the eggplant is done sweating, pat every piece completely dry with fresh paper towels and stack the rounds. Wipe the rimmed sheet pan dry and line it with fresh paper towels.

3. Preheat the oven to 350°F.

4. Meanwhile, set up your dredging station. Place the flour in one shallow bowl and beat the eggs in a second shallow bowl.
5. Keeping one hand dry and letting the other get wet, drag one piece of eggplant through the flour, shaking off any excess. Dredge it in the eggs, letting any excess drip off. Then place it back in the flour mixture, gently pressing to adhere an even layer of flour all over and letting any excess fall away. Place the coated eggplant on a large plate and repeat with 3 or 4 more slices until the plate is full.
6. In a large oven-safe skillet, heat a 1/4-inch layer of olive oil over medium heat. When the oil is shimmering, use tongs to add the coated eggplant, taking care not to crowd the skillet. Cook until the outside is crisp and golden brown, 2 to 3 minutes per side. (Remember, the eggplant does not cook fully here.) Transfer the fried eggplant to the prepared sheet pan.
7. Repeat the dredging and crisping, wiping out the skillet and heating fresh oil between each batch.
8. Wipe the skillet completely clean, then spread 1 cup of the marinara over the bottom. Add a single layer of eggplant, followed by another cup of the sauce, 2/3 cup Parmesan, and about a third of the mozzarella. Repeat this layering two more times, using up the remaining eggplant, marinara, Parmesan, and mozzarella. Clean and dry the rimmed sheet pan, then place the skillet on top and slide into the oven.
9. Bake for 30 to 45 minutes, until the cheese is bubbly and browned. Serve warm, ideally with some hunks of bread, if you like.

Antipasto Bar Salad

Serves 6

3 hearts of romaine lettuce, trimmed, washed, dried, and cut or sliced into bite-size pieces
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
3-4 cups of goodies from the antipasto bar at your supermarket such as marinated artichokes, peppadew peppers, olives (chopped)
1/2 small red onion, sliced very thin
1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan
Italian Dressing (see below)

Add romaine to a large shallow bowl and season with salt and pepper. Toss in antipasto goodies, red onion slices and Parmesan. Drizzle with Italian dressing, keeping in mind that there might already be some bonus dressing from the marinated antipasto goodies.

Italian Dressing In a jar or a small bowl, shake or whisk together: 1/3 cup red wine vinegar, 1/2 cup good olive oil, 1 tablespoon dried oregano, ½ teaspoon sugar, salt and pepper to taste.

Shopping List

Produce

2 large globe eggplants
3 hearts of romaine lettuce
small red onion

Pantry

Olive Oil (about 1 cup)
Red wine vinegar (1/3 cup)
Flour (1 cup)
Kosher salt
Black pepper
sugar (1/2 teaspoon)
Dried Oregano (1 tablespoon)
Jarred marinara, such as Rao's (you'll need 4 cups)

Dairy

Eggs (you'll need 2)
16 ounces mozzarella cheese
Parmesan (you'll need 2 ½ cups)

Misc

3-4 cups of goodies from the antipasto bar at your supermarket, such as marinated artichokes, peppadew peppers, olives
Crusty Bread or Baguette (optional)