



Eggplant Parmigiana

Ingredients:

For the sauce:

- 3 tbsp. of olive oil
- 3 cloves of garlic (whole)
- Pinch of hot pepper flakes (optional)
- 2-28 oz. can of San Marzano Tomato (whole)
- Fresh basil
- Salt to taste

For the eggplant:

- 2 large to medium eggplants  (peeled and cut into rings or lengthwise-your preference)
- 6 eggs
- 1 1/2 cups of all purpose flour (approx.)
- Salt & pepper to taste
- Frying oil (vegetable oil-at lease 1 inch thick in frying pan)

Additional ingredients:

- Fresh mozzarella (shredded) (about 2 cups)
- Fresh grated Parmiggiano (about 1 1/2 cups)
- Fresh basil (torn)
- Salt to taste

Directions:

Preheat your oven to 450 degrees.

Start by making the sauce. In a saucepan; add the oil, garlic and hot pepper flakes (if using), bring to a sizzle and once the garlic becomes fragrant and lightly golden, add the cans of tomatoes (and place a small amount of water-about 1/4 cup, in the bottom of one empty can, pour from can to can to pick up any sauce in the cans and pour the water mixture in the saucepan), add salt and basil, give it a stir, bring to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer on medium low for about 30 minutes while you fry the eggplant. (Taste in about 15 minutes and add more salt if needed, according to taste). When sauce is cooked, take off the stove and blend with an immersion blender or place in food processor to blend. Set aside.

While sauce is cooking, slice the eggplant medium thin with either a mandolin or a sharp knife.

In a shallow plate, add the flour, salt and pepper, set aside. In a separate shallow bowl, whisk together the eggs, salt and pepper.

In a large skillet, add about one inch of vegetable oil, preheat over medium heat (not too hot or the eggplant will burn on the outside but will remain raw on the inside--test when the oil is hot enough to fry by sprinkling with a few drops of water, if the oil sizzles, it's ready to fry). While the oil is heating, dredge each piece of eggplant in the flour, shake off any excess, dip into the beaten egg mixture. Add about 6 or 7 at a time to the egg mixture, then fry the eggplant 6 or 7 at a time in the hot oil and cook for a few minutes on each side or until golden brown. Drain the eggplant on a paper towel lined plater, blot excess oil, repeat this process until all the eggplant is cooked. (Cook in batches, remove all in the batch before adding more eggplant to the fry pan).

To assemble the baked version: Use a large, deep baking dish, place a couple ladles of sauce on the bottom of the dish, place the first layer of fried eggplant in the dish, add some Parmiggiano cheese, fresh mozzarella, torn fresh basil and top of a ladle of sauce. Repeat this procedure with the 2nd layer of eggplant. The final layer is topped with more sauce, especially around the edges. Bake for about 1/2 hour, in a 450 degree oven until bubbly and the cheese is melted, allow to cool for 30 minutes before serving. (Serve along side a crusty, toasted bread rubbed with garlic and sprinkled with olive oil which you bake for 10 minutes—Optional).

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