
EGGPLANT

Eggplant is a member of the nightshade family (tomatoes, potatoes, bell peppers, tobacco), and is warm weather crop that will grow well given adequate sunshine, warmth and moisture. It is a vegetable that performs well in northern greenhouses. Eggplant plays a central role in many classic dishes, including French ratatouille, Turkish and Greek moussaka, Indian bharta, and Arabian baba ghanoush. It is generally only available locally in the late summer and early fall.

NUTRITION

Eggplant is an excellent source of dietary fibre as well as nutrients such as potassium, copper, manganese, vitamin B1, vitamin B6, vitamin B3, folate and magnesium. Eggplant contains several phytonutrients that have been linked to cardiovascular health improvements. A powerful antioxidant called nasunin found in the skin of eggplants may aid in warding off cancer and the effects of aging. Interestingly, Eggplant contains the more nicotine than any other edible plant.

HOW TO SELECT

Look for eggplants that are firm and heavy, with smooth skin and vibrant colour. The leafy top should be as green as possible, indicating freshness. A ripe eggplant will give until the gentle pressure of your thumb and spring back when released. An unripe eggplant will not spring back and will have a more bitter taste

HOW TO PREPARE

RAW: Eggplant is not commonly eaten raw. The plant has a naturally bitter taste that is reduced when cooking.

COOKED: Eggplant plant is most often stewed, roasted or baked, but you may want to try it steamed, deep-fried or sautéed. Eggplant will soak up large quantities of oil and any flavours the oil carries. Try battering eggplant slices before frying to reduce the oil it absorbs. Choose large globe eggplants for the oven and small Japanese eggplants for frying.

SIMPLE EGGPLANT RECIPE

EGGPLANT, ONION, RED PEPPER, MUSHROOMS, FETA CHEESE, BACON, SPICES

1. Wash a large eggplant and slice lengthwise in half. Brush with oil, salt, and pepper.
2. Place eggplant halves face down in baking dish and bake 20 min at 350 degrees or until tender.
3. In a skillet, fry bacon, onions, peppers and mushroom. Add spices of your choice.
4. Use a spoon to scoop out roasted eggplant flesh, leaving skin intact.
5. Mix eggplant flesh with fried veggies and scoop mix back into eggplant skins. Top with feta
6. Place stuffed eggplants in oven and bake for 35 minutes at 350 degrees.