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Grilled Eggplant & Provolone Pizza

Adapted from Epicurious.com

Ingredients

1 garlic clove, minced
1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 1/4 pound eggplant, 3/4-inch-thick rounds
1 pound store-bought pizza dough at room temperature
5 ounces sliced provolone, cut into short thin matchsticks (1 1/4 cups)
1/3 cup pitted green olives, chopped
1/4 cup chopped flat-leaf parsley

Preparation

Prepare a gas grill for direct-heat cooking at medium. Stir together garlic and oil. Brush some of garlic oil on both sides of eggplant and season with 3/4 teaspoon salt & 1/2 teaspoon pepper. Grill, covered, turning once, until tender, 6 to 8 minutes total. Cut into roughly 1-inch pieces. Stretch dough into about a 12- by 10-inch rectangle on a large baking sheet and lightly brush with garlic oil. Oil grill rack, then put dough, oiled side down, on grill. Brush top with more garlic oil. Grill, covered, until underside is golden-brown, 1 1/2 to 3 minutes. Using tongs, return crust, grilled side up, to baking sheet. Scatter eggplant, cheese, olives, and parsley over crust. Slide pizza from sheet onto grill and grill, covered, until underside is golden-brown and cheese is melted, about 3 minutes.

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Ratatouille

Adapted from Epicurious.com

Ingredients

1 onion, sliced thin
2 garlic cloves, minced
5 tablespoons olive oil
3/4-pound eggplant, cut into 1/2-inch pieces (about 3 cups)
1 small zucchini, scrubbed, quartered lengthwise, and cut into thin slices
1 red bell pepper, chopped
3/4 pound small ripe tomatoes, chopped coarse (about 1 1/4 cups)
1/4 teaspoon dried oregano, crumbled
1/4 teaspoon dried thyme, crumbled
1/8 teaspoon ground coriander
1/4 teaspoon fennel seeds
3/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup shredded fresh basil leaves

Preparation

In a large skillet cook the onion and the garlic in 2 tablespoons of the oil over moderately low heat, stirring occasionally, until the onion is softened.

Add the remaining 3 tablespoons oil and heat it over moderately high heat until it is hot but not smoking. Add the eggplant and cook the mixture, stirring occasionally, for 8 minutes, or until the eggplant is softened. Stir in the zucchini and the bell pepper and cook the mixture over the moderate heat, stirring occasionally, for 12 minutes. Stir in the tomatoes and cook the mixture, stirring occasionally, for 5 to 7 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender. Stir in the oregano, the thyme, the coriander, the fennel seeds, the salt, and pepper to taste and cook the mixture, stirring, for 1 minute. Stir in the basil and combine the mixture well.

The ratatouille may be made 1 day in advance, kept covered and chilled, and reheated before serving.

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Minted Eggplant

Recipe from Epicurious.com

Ingredients

1/4 cup Sherry vinegar

3 medium eggplants (2 pounds total), trimmed and each cut lengthwise into 8 wedges

3/4 teaspoon salt

1 garlic clove, minced

1/2 teaspoon dried oregano, crumbled

1/8 teaspoon black pepper

6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh mint

2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Special equipment: a 12-inch collapsible steamer basket or a pasta pot with a shallow perforated colander-steamer insert

Preparation

Bring 1 inch water and 2 tablespoons vinegar to a boil in a large pot (or a deep skillet with a lid). Arrange eggplant, skin sides down, in steamer basket and sprinkle with 1/2 teaspoon salt, then steam, covered, until tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Transfer basket to sink and let eggplant drain 5 minutes.

Transfer eggplant to a deep platter. Whisk together garlic, oregano, pepper, remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt, and remaining 2 tablespoons vinegar in a small bowl, then add oil in a slow stream, whisking until combined. Pour dressing over eggplant while still warm and let marinate at room temperature, basting with dressing several times, 2 hours. Sprinkle with mint and parsley just before serving.

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1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
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1 pound store-bought pizza dough at room temperature
5 ounces sliced provolone, cut into short thin matchsticks (1 1/4 cups)
1/3 cup pitted green olives, chopped
1/4 cup chopped flat-leaf parsley

Preparation

Prepare a gas grill for direct-heat cooking at medium. Stir together garlic and oil. Brush some of garlic oil on both sides of eggplant and season with 3/4 teaspoon salt & 1/2 teaspoon pepper. Grill, covered, turning once, until tender, 6 to 8 minutes total. Cut into roughly 1-inch pieces.

Stretch dough into about a 12- by 10-inch rectangle on a large baking sheet and lightly brush with garlic oil. Oil grill rack, then put dough, oiled side down, on grill. Brush top with more garlic oil. Grill, covered, until underside is golden-brown, 1 1/2 to 3 minutes.

Using tongs, return crust, grilled side up, to baking sheet. Scatter eggplant, cheese, olives, and parsley over crust. Slide pizza from sheet onto grill and grill, covered, until underside is golden-brown and cheese is melted, about 3 minutes.

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Eggplant Fries

Recipe from Foodnetwork.com

Ingredients

1 cup all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons kosher salt, plus 1 teaspoon for seasoning
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
3 large eggs
1 cup panko breadcrumbs
1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan
1 medium eggplant (about 1 1/2 pounds)

Preparation:

For the fries: Place two racks in the upper and middle thirds of the oven and preheat the oven to 425 degrees F. Insert a wire rack into a large baking sheet.

Whisk together the flour, salt and pepper in a large bowl. Lightly beat the eggs in a medium bowl. Combine the panko and the Parmesan in another medium bowl.

Slice off both ends of the eggplant. Cut the eggplant in half lengthwise and slice each half into 1/2-to-3/4-inch thick layers, then cut each layer into 1/2-inch sticks. After all of the fries are cut, drop them into the flour and lightly toss them to coat evenly. Working in batches of a few at a time, dip the floured fries into the egg and then into the panko mixture. Place the fries on the wire rack in the baking sheet, leaving an 1/8-inch space between each fry.

Bake the fries until they are golden brown, about 15 minutes. Season the fries with the remaining salt.

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Classic Eggplant Parmesan

Adapted from Epicurious.com

Ingredients

2 1/2 lb medium eggplants (about 3), cut crosswise into 1/3-inch-thick rounds
3 1/4 teaspoons salt
5 lb plum tomatoes
1 1/2 cups plus 3 tablespoons olive oil
2 large garlic cloves, finely chopped
20 fresh basil leaves, torn in half
3/4 teaspoon black pepper
1/4 teaspoon dried hot red pepper flakes
1 cup all-purpose flour
5 large eggs
3 1/2 cups panko (Japanese bread crumbs)
2 oz finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano (2/3 cup)
1 lb chilled fresh mozzarella (not unsalted), thinly sliced

Preparation

Toss eggplant with 2 teaspoons salt in a colander set over a bowl, then let drain 30 minutes. While eggplant drains, cut an X in bottom of each tomato with a sharp paring knife and blanch tomatoes together in a 5-quart pot of boiling water 1 minute. Transfer tomatoes with a slotted spoon to a cutting board and, when cool enough to handle, peel off skin, beginning from scored end, with paring knife.

Coarsely chop tomatoes, then coarsely purée in batches in a blender. Heat 3 tablespoons oil in a 5-quart heavy pot over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking, then add garlic and sauté, stirring, until golden, about 30 seconds. Add tomato purée, basil, 1 teaspoon salt, 1/2 teaspoon pepper, and red pepper flakes and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until slightly thickened, 25 to 30 minutes.

Put oven rack in middle position and preheat oven to 375° F.

Stir together flour, remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt, and remaining 1/4 teaspoon pepper in a shallow bowl. Lightly beat eggs in a second shallow bowl, then stir together *panko* and 1/3 cup Parmigiano-Reggiano in a third shallow bowl.

Working with 1 slice at a time, dredge eggplant in flour, shaking off excess, then dip in egg, letting excess drip off, and dredge in *panko* until evenly coated. Transfer eggplant to sheets of wax paper, arranging slices in 1 layer.

Heat remaining 1 1/2 cups oil in a deep 12-inch nonstick skillet over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking, then fry eggplant 4 slices at a time, turning over once, until golden brown, 5 to 6 minutes per batch. Transfer with tongs to paper towels to drain.

Spread 1 cup tomato sauce in bottom of a rectangular 3 1/2-quart (13- by 11- by 2-inch) baking dish. Arrange about one third of eggplant slices in 1 layer over sauce, overlapping slightly if necessary. Cover eggplant with about one third of remaining sauce (about 1 1/4 cups) and one third of mozzarella. Continue layering with remaining eggplant, sauce, and mozzarella. Sprinkle top with remaining 1/3 cup Parmigiano-Reggiano.

Bake, uncovered, until cheese is melted and golden and sauce is bubbling, 35 to 40 minutes.

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Canned Eggplant

Recipe from Foodnetwork.com

Ingredients

For the pickling liquid:

1 quart cider or white wine vinegar

1 quart water

2 tablespoons sea salt

For the pickling marinade:

2 cups extra-virgin olive oil

5 cloves garlic, peeled and sliced

1 fresh red chili, deseeded and chopped

2 pounds firm eggplant

Preparation:

Make sure you have some small sterilized jars ready to go. Bring the pickling liquid ingredients to the boil in a big pan. Put the pickling marinade ingredients into a large bowl with your chosen herbs and mix well. Slice up your vegetable any way you like, but if it's a larger vegetable try to get the pieces around 1/2-inch in thickness. This way, the flavors and pickling liquid will penetrate sufficiently.

Place the sliced vegetables in the boiling pickling liquid and leave for around 3 minutes – they'll probably rise to the surface, so keep pushing them down to ensure they are all immersed. Lift the pieces out with a slotted spoon and place them into your bowl of pickling marinade. Toss together – it will smell fantastic.

Pretty much straightaway, put the hot vegetables and pickling marinade into your sterilized jars, filling them to the very top. Cover the vegetables completely with the marinade and put the lids on tightly. Put the jars aside until they're cool. Clean the jars, attach sticky labels and write the date and the contents on them. Store the jars somewhere cool and dark – it's best to leave them for about 2 weeks before opening so the vegetables really get to marinate well, but if you absolutely cannot wait, you can eat them sooner. They'll keep for about 3 months.

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Braised Lamb Shanks Wrapped in Eggplant

Recipe Courtesy of Epicurious.com

Ingredients:

For eggplant

2 (1 1/2-lb) eggplants (at least 10 inches long and 4 inches in diameter), trimmed
1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon black pepper

For shanks

6 lb lamb shanks, trimmed of excess fat
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon black pepper
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 large green bell pepper, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
2 garlic cloves, chopped
1 (1 1/2-inch) piece cinnamon stick
16 whole allspice
15 whole black peppercorns
2 Turkish bay leaves or 1 California
1 cup dry white wine
1 (28- to 32-oz) can whole tomatoes in purée, coarsely chopped (including purée) in a food processor

Preparation:

Bake eggplant:

Preheat oven to 350° F.

Remove 2-inch-wide strips of skin from opposite sides of each eggplant with a vegetable peeler and discard. Holding knife parallel to a peeled side, cut each eggplant lengthwise into 8 (1/3-inch-thick) slices.

Brush eggplant slices on both sides with oil and arrange in 1 layer in 2 shallow baking pans. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and bake in upper and lower thirds of oven, switching position of pans halfway through baking, until eggplant is tender and lightly browned, 30 to 40 minutes total. Cool eggplant in pans. Leave oven on.

Brown shanks while eggplant bakes:

Pat shanks dry and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Heat oil in a 12-inch heavy skillet over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking, then brown shanks in 2 batches, turning occasionally, about 5 minutes per batch. Transfer as browned to a roasting pan just large enough to hold shanks in 1 layer. Reserve skillet.

Cook bell pepper, garlic, spices, and bay leaves in fat remaining in skillet over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until garlic is golden, about 3 minutes. Add wine and bring to a boil, stirring and scraping up any brown bits. Add chopped tomatoes and bring to a boil. Season sauce with salt and pepper and pour over shanks (liquid should come about halfway up sides of meat).

Cover roasting pan tightly with foil and braise in middle of oven until very tender, 2 1/2 to 3 hours. Cool shanks, uncovered. Leave oven on.

Assemble eggplant and lamb bundles:

Remove shanks from sauce. Discard bones and gristle, then cut meat into 1 1/2-inch pieces. Skim fat from sauce and season sauce with salt and pepper. Spoon one third of sauce into a 13- by 9-inch glass or ceramic baking dish.

Arrange 2 eggplant slices end to end lengthwise on a work surface so that ends overlap by about 2 inches. Put one eighth of lamb on eggplant where it overlaps, then wrap ends of eggplant over lamb to form a bundle. Transfer bundle to baking dish with a wide metal spatula. Make 7 more bundles in same manner, arranging them in 1 layer in dish. Spoon remaining sauce over and around bundles and cover dish tightly with foil.

Braise bundles in middle of oven 30 minutes.

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Eggplant Dip (Baba Ghanoush)

Recipe Courtesy of Epicurious.com

Ingredients:

2 to 3 medium eggplants (about 3 pounds total)
2 to 3 tablespoons olive oil
1/3 cup tahini
2 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
Juice of 2 lemons (about 1/2 cup)
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preparation:

1. Preheat the oven to 450° F. Rub the outside of the eggplants with olive oil and place them in a roasting pan. Roast the eggplant until the skin has charred and the interior is tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Let cool.
2. Peel and seed the cooled eggplant, roughly chop the flesh, and then transfer it to the bowl of a food processor.
3. Into the processor bowl add the tahini, garlic, lemon juice, some salt and pepper to taste, and a few teaspoons of cold water. Process the mixture to a coarse paste, adding a bit more water as needed to allow the mixture to blend.
4. Adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper to taste and serve.