

A Sutherland Belle

Eggplant Parmigiana

INGREDIENTS

For the Marinara

- 1 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes
- 1 (15-ounce) can diced tomatoes
- 1 (15-ounce) can tomato sauce
- 1 cup chicken or vegetable stock
- 1/2 medium sweet onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoons granulated sugar
- Kosher salt and freshly cracked black pepper, to taste
- 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1/2 cup freshly basil leaves, chopped
- Zest of 1 lemon

For the Parmigiana

- 2 medium to large eggplants
- 2 tablespoons sea salt
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 2 cups marinara sauce, see above
- 16-ounce pre-sliced mozzarella cheese
- 1/2 cup parmesan cheese
- 12 fresh basil leaves
- fresh cracked black pepper
- 1/4 cup panko bread crumbs, optional

INSTRUCTIONS

For the Marinara

1. The first step is to heavily salt the eggplant. Thinly slice the eggplant and place them in a colander inside a bowl, sprinkle them lightly with salt, and set them aside for 1 hour.
2. Meanwhile, make the marinara.
3. Place crushed tomatoes, diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, stock, onion, garlic, and sugar into a large pot. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.
4. Cover and cook on low heat for 30-35 minutes.

5. Add lemon zest and basil to the sauce and stir well.

For the Parmigiana

1. Next, rinse the eggplant under cold water to remove the salt and pat them dry with a kitchen towel or paper.
2. Combine flour and garlic powder in a shallow bowl. Lightly dust the eggplant in the mix, shaking off any excess then fry them in olive oil for a few seconds each side. Once you've dusted a batch of eggplant in flour fry them straight away or the eggplant will soak up the flour and it can turn mushy.
3. Preheat your oven to 350F
4. Spoon a small amount of marinara into the bottom of a baking dish and spread it around, this will stop the eggplant from sticking.
5. Next add one layer of eggplant to the dish followed by a sprinkling of parmesan cheese, mozzarella, half of the basil, a sprinkling of pepper, and a little more marinara. Continue with the next layer until you have one top layer left.
6. For the top layer, spoon over the remaining tomato sauce and top with parmesan and mozzarella. Top with panko bread crumbs if using. Cover loosely with foil and bake for 20 minutes, remove the foil and bake for another 20 minutes until nice and golden and bubbling on top. Let it rest for 5 minutes before serving.
7. Top with additional basil if desired. I like to serve the additional sauce over spaghetti or bucatini as a side.