



Eggplant

The fruit of a plant originally from India, eggplant is a berry that is eaten as a vegetable. There are several varieties of eggplants. The purple-skinned eggplant, which has an elongated form like a large pear, is the most well-known variety. The Asian or "Chinese" eggplant refers to several varieties that can be as small as an egg, long and thin, or resemble a cluster of grapes. The thin, shiny, smooth skin can be dark or light purple, cream, white, green or orange. The yellow-white flesh is spongy and contains small brownish edible seeds.

Buying

Choose: a firm, heavy eggplant, with smooth, evenly colored skin, to test for ripeness, press sides gently; if the imprint remains visible, the eggplant is ready to eat.

Serving Ideas

Eggplant is delicious hot or cold. It can be stuffed, broiled, gratineed, stewed, skewered or pureed. It is cooked with tomatoes, garlic and olive oil.

Cooking

Blanch the eggplant for a few minutes before cooking.

Fried: coat slices of eggplant in flour, beaten egg and bread crumbs for deep or pan-frying. Coating eggplants reduces fat absorption.

Baked: prick the eggplant so that it doesn't burst. Cook whole and unpeeled at 350F for 15-25 minutes depending on size. It can also be halved so that it cooks evenly and faster. Stuffed, it will take 35-60 minutes at 350F to cook.

Grilled or broiled: cook 4 to 6 inches from the heat source until browned on both sides. Brush with oil if it looks dry.

Nutritional Information

Per 3.5 oz/100g	raw
Water	92%
Protein	1.2g
Carbohydrates	6.3g
Fiber	1.5g
Calories	27

Preparing

Prepare eggplant quickly or sprinkle it with lemon juice if it is left standing, as its flesh discolors quickly when cut. It is a good idea to cut large eggplants, sprinkle them liberally with salt and let sit for 1 to 2 hours to remove some of their water content and bitterness.

Eggplant can also be soaked in water for about 15 minutes, peeled, or simply cooked as is when using a less bitter variety.

Good Source: potassium

Contains: folic acids, copper and magnesium.

Properties: diuretic, laxative and calming.

Storing

In the fridge: 1 week. Remove any wrapping as quickly as possible and place the eggplant in a loosely closed or perforated plastic bag.

In the freezer: 6-8 months, blanch or steam prior to freezing.