

Tiny Tummies



Eggplant Gratin with Tomatoes and Ricotta

This gratin is a bit like eggplant parmesan, without all the work of breading and deep-frying. It can be assembled a day or two ahead and popped in the oven for a quick dinner – just add bread and a green salad.

If you and your kids aren't yet hooked on eggplant, this is a great recipe to start with since the eggplant is flavored with delicious tomatoes and basil and gilded with a creamy topping.

Serves 6

- 1 large eggplant (about 1 pound)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium red onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups canned diced tomatoes (or fresh diced tomatoes)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cup ricotta cheese
- 1 egg
- ½ cup sour cream or crème fraîche
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese, divided
- Pinch of ground nutmeg
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil

1. Preheat the oven to 350°. Peel the eggplant and cut it crosswise into 1/4 inch slices. Arrange the slices in a single layer on an oiled baking sheet. Bake until they soften, turning over once, about 30 minutes total.
2. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large skillet. Add the onion and sauté until translucent. Add the garlic and sauté a minute longer. Add the tomatoes and cook until the sauce thickens, about 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Note: You can substitute 2 cups of any tomato sauce.
3. Combine the ricotta, egg, sour cream and ¼ cup of the Parmesan cheese in a small bowl. Add a pinch each of salt, pepper, and nutmeg.
4. Increase the oven temperature to 400°.
5. To assemble the gratin: Oil a medium-size baking dish (an 8 x 8 dish or a pie plate works well) and arrange half the eggplant in it. Cover the eggplant with half the tomato sauce and sprinkle with the basil. Top with the remaining eggplant, then the other half of the tomato sauce, and spread with the ricotta mixture. Finally, sprinkle with the remaining Parmesan cheese.
6. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until the top is brown.