

# Eggplant Parmesan

By Eric Kim

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**Total Time** 1 hour 35 minutes

**Prep Time** 10 minutes

**Cook Time** 1 hour 25 minutes

**Rating** ★★★★★ (1,395)



Johnny Miller for The New York Times. Food Stylist: Rebecca Jurkevich.

The distinct layers of breaded eggplant, rich tomato sauce and melted cheeses are what make this version of the Italian American classic perfectly calibrated (and, frankly, easy to make). Eggplant Parmesan is a labor of love, but this recipe streamlines the process so the cooking can feel relaxing on a Sunday afternoon. Long sheets of panko-breaded eggplant slices crisp up gloriously in the oven on a sheet pan, which means no frying. Store-bought jarred marinara sauce works beautifully here, but homemade can lend its own kind of delicious character (see Tip). A fully baked and cooled eggplant Parmesan will keep in the freezer, tightly covered, for up to 3 months.

## Why You Should Trust This Recipe

Eric Kim sliced, salted, breaded, layered and baked more than 10 pounds of eggplants to develop this recipe. He consulted multiple chefs and employed their tips and techniques in his final version.

## INGREDIENTS

**Yield:** 6 to 8 servings

2 medium globe eggplants (about 2½ pounds), stems trimmed

Salt

1 cup all-purpose flour

4 large eggs, beaten

4 cups/10½ ounces panko bread crumbs

Olive oil

2 (24-ounce) jars store-bought marinara sauce (or use homemade; see Tip)

Fresh basil

2 cups/8 ounces shredded low-moisture mozzarella

½ cup/2 ounces grated Parmesan

## PREPARATION

### Step 1

Arrange two racks on the top third and bottom third of the oven. Heat the oven to 425 degrees.

### Step 2

Cut the eggplants lengthwise into ½-inch-thick slices. Salt both sides and let sit across two sheet pans to sweat for 10 minutes.

### Step 3

Prepare a breading station with three wide, shallow bowls. Add the flour to one bowl, the eggs to another and the panko to the third. Pat the eggplant slices dry, dip each in the flour, then the beaten eggs and finally the panko, really packing on the bread crumbs with your hands.

### Step 4

Generously grease the two sheet pans with olive oil and place the breaded eggplant in a single layer across both pans. Bake until crispy, switching the positions of the pans halfway through, about 30 minutes.

### Step 5

Meanwhile, to a large saucepan, add the marinara sauce and a sprig of basil. Fill one of the empty marinara sauce jars with ½ cup water, swish around, then pour into the second jar and swish again; pour this tomatoey water into the saucepan. Bring to a

simmer over medium-high and cook, stirring constantly, until heated through, about 5 minutes. Taste and add salt if desired.

#### **Step 6**

Grease a 9-by-13-inch baking pan or casserole dish (and set it on a sheet pan, if desired, to catch any potential spillover). Put down half of the baked eggplant in a single layer, cutting any pieces to make them fit. Cover with half of the sauce (about 2½ cups). Then, sprinkle over half of the mozzarella, followed by half of the Parmesan. Add a few basil leaves over the top. Top with another layer of the remaining eggplant, followed by the remaining sauce, then the remaining mozzarella and Parmesan. Bake on the bottom rack, uncovered, until browned on top and bubbly at the edges, 25 to 30 minutes.

#### **Step 7**

For clean slices and distinct layers, let the pan cool for at least 30 minutes before cutting into it. Before serving, top with more basil leaves.

#### **TIP**

*To make a homemade marinara sauce: While the eggplants are baking, heat a saucepan over medium-high and add enough oil to generously coat the bottom. Stir in 7 chopped garlic cloves, 2 teaspoons dried oregano and ½ teaspoon red-pepper flakes and cook until fragrant, 30 seconds. Purée two (28-ounce) cans whole peeled tomatoes, preferably San Marzano, and add to the pan, along with ½ cup water swished around both cans to catch any clinging tomato. Season with salt. Bring the sauce to a simmer and cook, lid ajar and stirring occasionally, until slightly thickened, 30 to 40 minutes. Taste and add more salt as desired and a pinch of sugar if needed. Makes about 5 cups.*

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