

BAKED EGGPLANT PARMESAN

8 – 10 SERVINGS

This Baked Eggplant Parmesan recipe is made lighter by being baked with a crispy Panko breading, yet still has all of the delicious and comforting flavors of the classic dish! It only takes 50 minutes from start to finish

Ingredients:

- 2 medium eggplants (*about 2 pounds total*), sliced into 1/2-inch thick rounds
- 2 cups Panko breadcrumbs
- 1 tablespoon Italian seasoning
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon fine sea salt (*plus extra for sweating the eggplant if desired*)
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly-cracked black pepper
- 2 large eggs
- 4 cups marinara sauce, homemade or store-bought*
- 2 cups shredded Mozzarella cheese
- 2/3 cup finely-grated or shaved Parmesan cheese, plus extra for serving
- 1 cup chopped fresh basil leaves



INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Sweat the eggplant (optional).** If you have extra time and would like to remove some of the bitterness of the eggplant, line a [large sheet pan](#) (or two [half sheet pans](#)) with paper towels and place the eggplant rounds on the sheet in an even layer. Sprinkle evenly and generously with salt, then let the eggplant rounds rest for 30-60 minutes so that the sometimes-bitter liquids inside can sweat out. Transfer the eggplant rounds to a colander and rinse with cold water to remove the salt, then pat the eggplant dry with a clean paper towels.
2. **Toast the Panko (optional).** If you would like your Panko breadcrumbs to be extra crispy and golden, spread them out in an even layer on a sheet pan. Bake at 400°F for 4 minutes or until golden, then remove the baking sheet and give the Panko a stir. Bake for another 2-3 minutes or until golden, then remove, stir and set aside. (The Panko will start to brown quickly, so keep a close eye on it while cooking to ensure that it does not burn.)
3. **Prep the oven and baking sheet(s).** Heat oven to 425°F. Line a [large sheet pan](#) (or two [half sheet pans](#)) with parchment paper, and set aside.
4. **Bread the eggplant.** In a shallow bowl, whisk together the Panko breadcrumbs, Italian seasoning, garlic powder and (1 teaspoon) fine sea salt and black pepper until combined. In a separate bowl, whisk together the eggs with 2 tablespoons water. Dip an eggplant round in the egg mixture so that is evenly coated on all sides, then transfer to the breadcrumb mixture and coat on all sides, then place it on the prepared baking sheet.* Repeat with the remaining eggplant rounds until they are all coated and evenly spaced on the baking sheet(s). Bake for 25 minutes, until the eggplant is softened and mostly cooked through. Transfer baking sheet(s) to a wire rack and set aside.
5. **Layer the casserole.** Spread 1/2 cup marinara sauce evenly across the bottom of a 9 x 13-inch baking dish. Place half of the eggplant in an even-ish layer along the bottom of the dish, topped evenly with 1 cup marinara sauce, 1 cup Mozzarella, all of the Parmesan, and half of the basil, the remaining eggplant, remaining marinara sauce, and the remaining Mozzarella.

6. **Bake.** Bake for 20-25 minutes until the cheese is melted and starts to turn slightly golden around the edges and the eggplant is cooked to your liking. Transfer pan to a wire cooling rack and sprinkle with the remaining basil and extra Parmesan.
7. **Serve.** Serve warm, garnished with extra Parmesan (and basil, if desired).

Source: gimmesomeoven.com