

Many believe this ancient Sicilian meal from Parma was named because of its origin and use of Parmigiano cheese—but it actually got its name because of its fine slices of eggplant. Through time the flavors and process have changed and evolved from region to region in Italy, and then again once it got to America. My lighter, more streamlined version celebrates the freshness of the eggplant and tomato sauce. I roast the eggplant slices instead of breading and frying them, allowing for the natural liquid in the eggplant to evaporate and the texture to resemble fresh pasta. Sometimes I also include fresh roasted zucchini, yellow squash, Japanese eggplant or sautéed porcini mushrooms as a top layer for an added dimension. This is a simple dish to master, and is sure to be a crowd pleaser. Of course, it is best enjoyed with a glass of *Pellegrini Family Estate* wine.

- Kathryn Pellegrini

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## Parmigiana di Melanzane Arrostita

Olive oil cooking spray such as Pam  
 2 small eggplants (1 1/2 pounds each),  
 cut into 1/4-inch slices  
 1/4 cup olive oil  
 1/2 teaspoon sea salt  
 1/2 teaspoon red pepper  
 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper  
 1 tablespoon fresh chopped rosemary  
 2 medium cloves garlic, chopped  
 1 yellow onion, chopped  
 1 28 oz can of tomatoes  
 (La Valle San Marzano peeled  
 tomatoes with basil leaf are preferred)  
 2 cups fresh sliced cremini mushrooms  
 1 cup fresh sliced chanterelle mushrooms  
 1/3 cup chopped fresh Italian parsley  
 1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil  
 4 oz shredded dry mozzarella cheese  
 (about 1 cup)  
 2 oz grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese  
 (about 1/2 cup)

Preheat oven to 450°. Spray two large cookie sheets with olive oil cooking spray. Place eggplant slices evenly on cookie sheets (do not overlap), and lightly brush with olive oil and sprinkle with 1/4 teaspoon of salt, red pepper and rosemary on both sides. Roast 10 minutes; turn slices and roast until the eggplant has browned and is tender (about 15-20 minutes). Remove eggplant from the oven and allow to cool for better handling.

Meanwhile, in a nonstick 12-inch skillet, coat pan with one tablespoon of olive oil. Over medium heat, add the onions and cook until translucent, then add the ground black pepper, 1/4 teaspoon of salt and the garlic; cook until the garlic is lightly browned. Add the mushrooms and parsley and sauté for 3-5 minutes. Add the tomatoes to the mushroom and onion mixture, and with a wooden spoon, mash the tomatoes to create a sauce. Continue cooking over low heat, stirring occasionally, until sauce has thickened (about 20 minutes). Stir in the basil.

Reduce oven heat to 400°. Coat the bottom of a shallow 2 1/4-quart baking dish with a thin layer of the tomato sauce. Layer 1/4 of the eggplant, followed by another thin layer of tomato sauce, and 1 oz of mozzarella cheese. Repeat this step four more times until all the eggplant is used. Finally, top with a 1/2 cup of Parmigiano Reggiano. If you wish to incorporate other roasted vegetables or porcini mushrooms, make that your top vegetable layer.

Cover the baking dish loosely with foil and bake until bubbling, about 10 minutes. Remove from the oven and let stand at least 10 minutes before serving. Serve hot or at room temperature.

Serves 6

