



Stuffed Eggplant Mediterranean Delight

A Dish That Feels Like Sunshine

I first tried stuffed eggplant on a trip to Greece. The warm sun, the salty sea air. The first bite was pure joy. Creamy cheese, savory sausage, and bright tomato sauce. **Ever wondered how to make a simple veggie feel luxurious?** This recipe brings that vacation feeling right home. It turns basic ingredients into something magical. The smell alone will make your kitchen happy.

My First Kitchen Adventure

My first time making this, I was so nervous. I almost forgot to salt the eggplant shells. They turned out a bit soft but still delicious. **That**

mishap taught me a great lesson. Home cooking is not about being perfect. It is about the love you put in. A imperfect meal made by you is still a gift.

Why The Taste Works So Well

Two things make this dish a real winner. The crispy panko topping adds a wonderful crunch. It contrasts the soft, saucy filling inside. The lemon zest in the breadcrumbs is a genius touch. It gives a fresh zing that cuts the richness. Which flavor combo surprises you the most? Tell me in the comments below!

A Taste of The Mediterranean Sea

This style of cooking comes from coastal towns. Families there use what is fresh and local. Eggplant grows well in the warm climate. *Did you know the word eggplant has different names worldwide?* This dish is a celebration of simple, good food. It is meant to be shared with people you love. What is your favorite food memory from a trip?



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Ingredients:

| Ingredient | Amount | Notes |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Eggplants | 2 medium | |
| Extra virgin olive oil | 2 tablespoons | For eggplant shells |
| Coarse kosher salt | 1/4 teaspoon | For eggplant shells |
| Freshly ground black pepper | 1/4 teaspoon | For eggplant shells |
| Marinara sauce | 1 cup | Divided |
| Ricotta cheese | 1/2 cup | |
| Egg | 1 | |
| Dried Italian seasoning | 2 teaspoons | |
| Coarse kosher salt | 1/2 teaspoon | For filling |
| Freshly ground black pepper | 1/2 teaspoon | For filling |
| Red wine vinegar | 1 tablespoon | |
| Extra virgin olive oil | 3 tablespoons | For filling |
| Bulk Italian sausage | 3/4 pound | Mild or hot |
| White onion | 1/2 cup | Chopped |
| Fresh garlic | 3 cloves | Minced |
| Extra virgin olive oil | 1 tablespoon | For panko topping |
| Plain panko bread crumbs | 2/3 cup | |
| Fresh lemon zest | 1 1/2 teaspoons | |
| Coarse kosher salt | 1/4 teaspoon | For panko topping |
| Freshly ground black pepper | 1/4 teaspoon | For panko topping |
| Fresh mozzarella cheese | 8 slices | Optional |
| Parmesan cheese | 2 tablespoons | Freshly shredded, optional |
| Fresh basil | As needed | Thinly sliced, optional |

How to Make Stuffed Eggplant

Step 1

First, heat your oven to 400°F. Cut two eggplants in half the long way. Scoop out the inside flesh carefully. Leave about a quarter-inch shell.

See also Creamy Pesto Chicken with Roasted Tomatoes Dinner

Step 2

Brush the shells with olive oil. Season them with salt and pepper. Bake them shell-side down for 15 minutes. (A hot tip: baste the oil fast. Eggplant soaks it up quickly!)

Step 3

Mix ricotta, egg, and half the marinara. Add Italian seasoning, salt, and pepper. Stir in the red wine vinegar. Set this cheesy mix aside.

Step 4

Brown the Italian sausage in a skillet. Remove it, then cook the chopped eggplant in the fat. Cook onion and garlic until soft. Combine everything with the ricotta mix.

Step 5

Fill the par-baked shells with the mixture. Bake for 20 minutes at 350°F. Top with more sauce and mozzarella. Bake five more minutes until bubbly.

What gives the panko topping its zesty crunch? Share below!

Cook Time: 40 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour

Yield: 4 servings

Category: Dinner, Mediterranean

Make It Your Own

This recipe is a wonderful starting point. You can easily twist it to fit your taste. Try one of these fun ideas for your next meal.

Vegetarian Twist

Swap the sausage for lentils or mushrooms. They soak up all the great flavors.

Spicy Kick

Use hot Italian sausage. Add a pinch of red pepper flakes to the filling.

Summer Garden

Add fresh chopped zucchini and tomatoes. Mix them right into the filling.

Which creative spin sounds best to you? Vote in the comments!

Serving Your Masterpiece

This dish is a full meal by itself. For a bigger spread, add a simple side. A crisp green salad is always perfect. Garlic bread is great for soaking up sauce.

For drinks, try a light red wine. A non-alcoholic sparkling lemonade also pairs well. Both cut through the rich, cheesy filling nicely.

Which would you choose tonight: wine or lemonade?



Stuffed Eggplant Mediterranean Delight

Storing Your Mediterranean Delight

Let your stuffed eggplant cool completely first. Then, wrap it tightly and refrigerate for up to three days. You can also freeze the stuffed shells for one month. Thaw in the fridge before reheating. Reheat in the oven until warm all the way through.

See also Shepherd's Pie Twice Baked Potato Delight

This makes a fantastic batch-cook meal for busy weeks. I always make a double batch on Sundays. My grandkids love having a ready-made dinner. What is your favorite meal to prep ahead of time?

Fixes for Common Kitchen Hiccups

Is your eggplant shell too soft? Pre-baking it first creates a firm base. This matters because it holds all the yummy filling. If your filling seems too wet, sauté the eggplant cubes longer. Cook out that extra moisture for a better texture.

Is the panko topping not crispy enough? Make sure your skillet is hot enough. Toast the breadcrumbs until they are a deep golden brown. This adds a wonderful crunch that everyone loves. Have you ever had a cooking problem you fixed?

Your Questions, Answered

Q: Can I make this gluten-free? A: Yes! Just use your favorite gluten-free breadcrumbs for the topping. It works perfectly.

Q: How far ahead can I prepare this? A: You can assemble the

whole dish a day in advance. Just keep it covered in your fridge until baking.

Q: Can I swap the sausage for something else? A: Sure. Ground beef, turkey, or even lentils are great swaps. Use what you like best.

Q: Can I double this recipe for a crowd? A: Absolutely. Use two baking dishes so the eggplants aren't too crowded. They will cook evenly.

Q: Is the egg necessary for the filling? A: It helps bind everything together. For a substitute, try a flax egg. It works well too.

Share Your Masterpiece

I hope this recipe brings joy to your table. It is a family favorite for a good reason. I love seeing your creations. Please share your photos with me. Tag **@SavoryDiscovery** on Pinterest so I can see!

Happy cooking! —Elowen Thorn.

You need to try this!



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Author: Elowen Thorn



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Cooking Method: [Baking](#)

Cuisine: [Mediterranean](#)



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Courses: [Dinner](#) [Main](#)

Difficulty: **Beginner**



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Prep time: **15 minutes**



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Cook time: **20 minutes**

Rest time:



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Total time: **35 minutes**



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Servings: **4 servings**



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Calories: **kcal**

Best Season: **Summer**

Description

Filled with a saucy, cheesy sausage filling and topped with crispy panko,

this Stuffed Eggplant will be your new favorite dinner recipe!

Ingredients

=== Eggplants: ===

- ☐ 2 medium eggplants
- ☐ 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- ☐ 1/4 teaspoon coarse kosher salt
- ☐ 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

=== Filling: ===

- ☐ 1 cup favorite marinara sauce (, divided)
- ☐ 1/2 cup ricotta cheese
- ☐ 1 egg
- ☐ 2 teaspoon dried Italian seasoning
- ☐ 1/2 teaspoon coarse kosher salt
- ☐ 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ☐ 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- ☐ 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- ☐ cubed eggplant from shells
- ☐ 3/4 pound bulk Italian sausage (, mild or hot)
- ☐ 1/2 cup white onion (, chopped)
- ☐ 3 cloves fresh garlic (, minced)

=== Panko Topping: ===

- ☐ 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- ☐ 2/3 cup plain panko bread crumbs
- ☐ 1 1/2 teaspoon fresh lemon zest

- ☐ 1/4 teaspoon coarse kosher salt
- ☐ 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

=== Optional Toppings: ===

- ☐ 8 slices fresh mozzarella cheese
- ☐ 2 tablespoons parmesan cheese (, freshly shredded)
- ☐ fresh basil (, thinly sliced)

Instructions

1. === Eggplant Shells: === 1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Coat a 9×13 baking dish lightly with cooking spray, set aside. 2. Using a large knife, cut both eggplants in half lengthwise. Using a large metal spoon, scoop out the flesh, attempting to keep it in large pieces. Keep the skins intact about 1/4 inch. Set the eggplant flesh aside. 3. Evenly divide the olive oil between each eggplant shell, basting as soon as you pour it in, then season with the salt and black pepper. Eggplant will absorb the oil very fast, so baste right away to avoid having to use too much. 4. Flip the eggplants, shell side down, and bake uncovered for 15 minutes. Remove, flip over and set aside. Reduce the oven temperature to 350°F.
2. === Filling: === 5. In a large mixing bowl, stir together 1/2 cup of the marinara sauce, ricotta cheese, egg, dried Italian seasoning, salt, black pepper and red wine vinegar. Set aside. 6. Chop the eggplant flesh into uniformly sized pieces about 1 inch big. 7. In a large skillet over medium heat, brown the Italian sausage, breaking into smaller pieces as it cooks. When cooked, remove to a paper towel lined plate using a slotted spoon. Set aside, reserve the rendered sausage fat. 8. Add the cubed eggplant to the same skillet, using the sausage fat as oil to prevent sticking, adding 1 additional tablespoon of olive oil, if needed. Saute over medium

heat for 4-5 minutes, or until the chunks turn translucent. Using a slotted spoon, transfer them to the large mixing bowl with the ricotta mixture, along with the drained crumbled sausage. 9. In the same skillet, heat 1 tablespoon of the olive oil over medium heat, adding the chopped onion. Cook for 2 minutes or until it becomes fragrant and starts to soften. Add the minced garlic, sauteing an additional 1 minutes. Transfer the mixture to the large mixing bowl. 10. Toss the filling together. Mound into each eggplant shell. 11. Bake, uncovered, for 20 minutes. 12. Remove and top with the remaining marinara sauce, slices of mozzarella cheese, if using. Return to the oven for 5 minutes until cheese has melted.

3. === Panko Topping: === 13. While the eggplant bakes, heat the olive oil in a small skillet over medium heat, stirring in the panko bread crumbs, lemon zest, salt and black pepper. Stir every minute for 3-4 minutes, or until golden brown. Remove from the heat.
4. === Assembly: === 14. Plate each eggplant, topping with 1-2 tablespoons of panko bread crumbs and shredded parmesan cheese and fresh basil, if desired. 15. If you've tried this recipe, come back and let us know how it was in the comments and star ratings.

Keywords: Eggplant, Sausage, Ricotta, Mozzarella, Panko, Dinner
See also Lemon Chicken Gnocchi with Tangy Easy Flavors