

The Fainting Imam

Imam Bayaldi

INGREDIENTS:

Servings: 2 people

Long narrow eggplants	3
Salt	2 tsp
Onion	1
Tomatoes	1-2
Olive oil	1/4 cup
Chopped garlic cloves	2
Salt and freshly ground pepper	to taste
Chopped parsley	large bunch
Fresh lemon juice	from 1/2 lemon
Sugar	1 tsp
Water	3 tbs

Servings: 4 people

Long narrow eggplants	5-6
Salt	1 tbs
Onion	2
Tomatoes	3
Olive oil	1/2 cup
Chopped garlic cloves	3
Salt and freshly ground pepper	to taste
Chopped parsley	large bunch
Fresh lemon juice	from 1/2 lemon
Sugar	1 tsp
Water	1/4 cup

Servings: 6 people

Long narrow eggplants	8
Salt	2 tbs
Onion	3
Tomatoes	4
Olive oil	1/2 cup
Chopped garlic cloves	5
Salt and freshly ground pepper	to taste

Chopped parsley	large bunch
Fresh lemon juice	from 1 lemon
Sugar	1 tsp
Water	1/2 cup

Servings: 8 people

Long narrow eggplants	10-11
Salt	3 tbs
Onion	4
Tomatoes	5
Olive oil	3/4 cup
Chopped garlic cloves	7
Salt and freshly ground pepper	to taste
Chopped parsley	large bunch
Fresh lemon juice	from 1 1/2 lemons
Sugar	1 tsp
Water	3/4 cup

Servings: 10 people

Long narrow eggplants	13
Salt	3 tbs
Onion	5
Tomatoes	7
Olive oil	3/4 cup
Chopped garlic cloves	8
Salt and freshly ground pepper	to taste
Chopped parsley	large bunch
Fresh lemon juice	from 1 1/2 lemons
Sugar	2 tsp
Water	3/4 cup

Servings: 12 people

Long narrow eggplants	16
Salt	1/4 cup
Onion	6
Tomatoes	8
Olive oil	3/4 cup
Chopped garlic cloves	10
Salt and freshly ground pepper	to taste
Chopped parsley	large bunch
Fresh lemon juice	from 2 lemons
Sugar	2 tsp
Water	1 cup

TOOLS:

Small knife
Bowl
Saucepan
Chef's knife
Cutting board
Frying pan
Pepper mill
Wooden spoon
Large heavy pot with a lid
Juicer

INFO:

There are many stories regarding the origins of this dish and it is impossible to know the truth. Did the Imam faint because he was so overcome by the flavors of the dish, or was he shocked at how much his servants had spent on the olive oil required to make it? The answer remains a mystery. Clearly, the Turks enjoy talking about the dish almost as much as eating it. You too will be certain to enjoy its taste as much as the Imam did.

TIME:

prep time : 00:30

cook time : 00:45

PREPARATION:

Cut off the stems of the eggplants. Using a small knife, peel strips of the skin lengthwise to get a striped effect. Cut a deep slit on one side (lengthwise) and stop almost at the other side. Fill a bowl with water and mix in 2 tbs of salt. Place the eggplants in the water and let sit for 30 minutes.

While the eggplants are soaking, peel and slice the onion into 8-10 wedges. Blanch, peel and chop the tomatoes.

Heat half of the olive oil in a heavy frying pan. Fry the onion until nearly transparent. Add the garlic and fry for another minute. Add the tomatoes and cook over medium-low heat for 5 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste and sprinkle in the parsley. Remove the mixture from the frying pan.

In the same frying pan, heat the remaining oil over high heat. Remove the eggplants from the water and gently squeeze out any excess moisture. Fry the eggplants until lightly brown but still firm.

Let the eggplant cool slightly and then stuff as much of the mixture as possible into the cut eggplant. There should be some stuffing left over. Spread half of the remaining stuffing over the bottom of the pot. Arrange the eggplants over the stuffing and then spoon the remainder of the stuffing over the eggplants. Add the lemon juice, sugar and water. Cover the pot and cook over medium-low heat for 45 minutes. When using older eggplants, add water periodically to prevent them from drying. Let cool for one hour before serving. Serve at room temperature.