

Baked Eggplant with Tomatoes, Tarragon & Creme Fraiche

SKYE GYNGELL

We were delighted when Skye Gyngell agreed to cook at our major fundraising dinner in Sydney, and just had to ask her for a recipe. This dish sings of summer and is perfect served just warm with nutty brown rice, garlicky yoghurt and a rocket salad on the side. It also works really well with grilled or barbecued lamb.

Lay the eggplant slices in a colander and sprinkle generously with salt. Leave to release the bitter juices for 30 minutes (beads of moisture will appear on the eggplant flesh). Pat both sides dry with paper towel.

Pour olive oil into a large frying pan to a depth of 1 cm and place over medium-high heat. When hot, add the eggplant slices in batches and cook until golden on both sides. Remove and drain on paper towel.

Melt the butter in a medium saucepan over low heat. Add the tomato and garlic and season with a good pinch of salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 15 minutes or until the tomato has softened. Remove from the heat and set aside.

Meanwhile, place the creme fraiche in a small saucepan and bring to the boil over medium heat. Simmer gently until reduced by one-third, then remove from the heat. Stir in the chopped herbs and half the parmesan. Season to taste.

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Line the base of a large shallow baking dish with a layer of eggplant slices. Follow with a thin coating of the tomato sauce and a sprinkling of parmesan. Continue layering in this way, finishing with the tomato sauce. Pour over the herby creme fraiche and sprinkle with the remaining parmesan. Leave the dish to sit for a few minutes to allow the flavours to get acquainted with each other.

Bake for 20-25 minutes or until golden, then remove and stand for 5 minutes or so. Drizzle with a little extra virgin olive oil and sprinkle with a pinch or two of salt. Scatter over some extra parsley and serve ... but not too hot!

1.5 kg eggplant, trimmed and
cut into 1 cm thick rounds

sea salt and freshly ground
black pepper

olive oil, for shallow-frying

50 g unsalted butter

1 kg ripe tomatoes, coarsely chopped

4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced

400 g creme fraiche

2 tablespoons finely
chopped tarragon

2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf
parsley, plus extra leaves to serve

2 teaspoons chopped thyme
(ideally lemon thyme)

1 tablespoon finely chopped chives

50 g parmesan, finely grated

extra virgin olive oil, for drizzling



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