



AUBERGINE PARMIGIANA

Ingredients

3 large Aubergines

Olive oil

1 onion peeled and finely chopped

1-2 cloves of garlic peeled and finely sliced

1 heaped teaspoon of dried oregano or a handful of fresh from the garden (finely chopped)

2x400 tin plum tomatoes or a jar of your canned garden tomatoes or a kilo of fresh tomato, peeled and chopped

sea salt and fresh ground pepper

Wine or cider vinegar

1 large handful of fresh basil

3 large handfuls of fresh grated parmesan cheese

2 handfuls of dried breadcrumbs

150g mozzarella (optional), I also like a handful of grated mature cheddar too

Method

1. Remove stalks from the Aubergines, slice them up into 1cm thick slices lengthways.
2. Get a frying pan or light the barbecue and get it really hot, cook the aubergine slices on both sides until coloured. This can be done in batches, I usually use 2 frying pans at once. Stack cooked Aubergine on kitchen paper until all slices are fried. Use a little olive oil for each batch too.
3. In another frying pan add a glug of olive oil and add the onion, garlic and dried oregano, cook for 10 minutes until the onion is soft and the garlic has a tiny bit of colour
4. Add the tomato flesh or tinned tomatoes to the onion mixture, give it a good stir, put a lid on and simmer for 15 minutes.
5. When the tomato sauce is reduced season carefully with salt, pepper and a tiny swig of vinegar and add the basil. I prefer to leave the sauce chunky but you can puree it at this point if you wish.
6. Use an earthenware type of dish (25 x 12-15cm approximately). Put in a small layer of tomato sauce, then a thin scattering of parmesan cheese, followed by a single layer of the cooked Aubergine slices. Repeat these layers until you've used up all the ingredients.
7. Finish with a little sauce, a final sprinkling of parmesan, then sprinkle the bread crumbs on top mixed with some more oregano (chopped freshly if you can).
8. Finally tear up the mozzarella and cover the top, mix with the mature cheddar if you want.
9. Bake at 190C/375F/gas5 for half an hour until golden, crisp and bubbly.

Notes

This is best served hot but is also good cold. You can substitute all or some of the aubergine for courgette or fennel, both are also delicious but my favourite is definitely Aubergine!