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# Eggplant Parmesan Casserole II

*Chef John*

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Servings: 6

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Start to Finish Time: 1 hour 15 minutes

**2 (one-pound) eggplants**

**3 tablespoons olive oil**

**2 cloves garlic, sliced**

**1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper**

**3 cups low-sodium marinara sauce**

**1/2 cup water, plus more as needed**

**3/4 cup ricotta cheese**

**1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese**

**1/4 cup (1 ounce) shredded pepper jack cheese**

**grated parmesan cheese (for topping)**

**fresh basil leaves (for topping) (optional)**

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

Cut five crosswise slices from the center portion of each eggplant, about 1/2-inch thick, for ten slices total. Dice the remaining pieces.

Heat one tablespoon of oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat until very hot. Cook half of the eggplant slices in hot oil, turning once, until slightly softened and browned, about 6 minutes. Transfer to paper towels to drain. Add one tablespoon of oil to the skillet and repeat with the remaining eggplant slices.

Heat the remaining one tablespoon of oil in the skillet over medium heat. Add the diced eggplant. Cook until the eggplant is slightly softened, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and crushed red pepper. Cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 10 seconds. Add the marinara sauce and water. Reduce the heat to medium-low and cook, uncovered and stirring occasionally, until the eggplant is tender, about 15 minutes. If the sauce gets too thick, add a little more water.

In a bowl, stir together the ricotta, 1/2 cup of Parmesan cheese and the pepper jack cheese. Spread about two tablespoons of the cheese mixture over each eggplant slice. Fold the slices in half to enclose the cheese mixture.

Spread half of the sauce in an 8-by-8 baking dish. Arrange the folded eggplant slices in a single layer over the sauce. Spread the remaining sauce over the top. Sprinkle with the remaining two tablespoons of Parmesan cheese.

Bake, uncovered, until the casserole is bubbling, 35 to 40 minutes. Let stand for 5 to 10 minutes before serving. Sprinkle with basil leaves, if using.

## Side Dishes

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*Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 185 Calories; 13g Fat (61.1% calories from fat); 8g Protein; 11g Carbohydrate; 4g Dietary Fiber; 21mg Cholesterol; 155mg Sodium. Exchanges: 0 Grain(Starch); 1 Lean Meat; 2 Vegetable; 2 Fat.*