



Eggplant

Growing & Harvest Info

Eggplants prefer fertile, well-drained, slightly acidic soil and need long, warm climates and moderate moisture to grow. Begin plants inside about 6 weeks before the last spring frost date. Plant seeds 1/4 inch deep in flats and keep soil warm.

About 2 to 3 weeks after last frost, transplant eggplants outside. Set transplants 18 to 24 inches apart in rows 30 to 36 inches apart. Plants benefit from staking so they don't become weighed down. Colder climates benefit from row covers, raised beds, or black plastic mulch.

Plants are ready to harvest once they've developed color, but not lost their shine. Press the ball of your thumb into the vegetable and if it does not rebound when released, it is mature. Cut them from the plant and leave a stem connected.

Introduction

Eggplants are thought to be both a delicious vegetable and a decorative ornamental plant. However, they are part of the berry family. They come in a variety of shapes and colors, from light to deep purple, and even white. Similar to tomatoes, eggplants grow on vines that reach several feet in height.

Preservation

Storage:

- Store in a cool, dry place for 1 to 2 days if plan to eat soon
- Wrap in a paper towel and place eggplant in the refrigerator crisper to keep for 5-7 days

Freezing:

- Eggplant can be roasted before freezing by cutting the vegetable in half, roasting in the oven at 400 degrees for 30 minutes, and placing them in an airtight container or freezer bag in the freezer after they have cooled.
- Blanched eggplant can also be frozen. Peeling and cut the eggplant and place in boiling water for 4 minutes. Transfer into an ice bath until cool, drain the water and place in plastic bags in the freezer.

Dehydration:

- Dehydrate 1/2 inch slices on lowest setting in oven or in a dehydrator until crispy. They can be kept in the freezer or pantry and boiled in water for 5 minutes to re-hydrate for use later.

Nutritional Benefits

Eggplant

Source	Rating
Vitamins	MODERATE
Minerals	MODERATE
Fiber	GOOD

Eggplant state	Use by
Refrigerated	5-7 days
Frozen	3-6 months
Raw	1-2 days



Eggplant

Preparation

Recipe 1: Olive Oil Roasted Eggplant with Lemon

Ingredients

- 1 large eggplant
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tbsp fresh lemon juice

Directions

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Line baking sheet with parchment paper or lightly grease.
- Slice eggplant in half lengthwise, cut each half into quarters lengthwise. Cut each quarter in half to make two shorter quarters. Place eggplant on baking sheet, skin side down. Brush each with olive oil, season with salt and pepper.
- Roast in oven until softened and golden brown, 25 to 30 min. Remove from oven, sprinkle with lemon juice. Serve hot.

Recipe 2: Baked Breaded Eggplant

Ingredients

- 1 medium eggplant, peeled and sliced into 1/2 inch rounds
- 4 tbsp mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup seasoned bread crumbs

Directions

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line baking sheet with aluminum foil.
- Place bread crumbs in shallow dish. Coat slices of eggplant on both sides with mayonnaise. Coat in breadcrumbs. Place slices on prepared baking sheet.
- Bake 20 min in oven, until golden brown. Flip slices over, cook for additional 20 to 25 min to brown other side.

Eggplant contains a fair amount of *nasunin*, which is an antioxidant that protects lipids that surround brain cell membranes to keep free radicals out.

Try Eggplant like this:

Cold	Grilled
Marinated	Fried
Stuffed	Casseroles
Roasted	In Stews

Eggplants can be eaten with or without skin, but sometimes the skin can be tough or bitter.