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Stuffed Baked Eggplant features a bounty of vegetables, perfect for spring

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Stuffed Baked Eggplant Photos Susie Iventosch

The other day I found a beautiful eggplant at the store and immediately knew how I would prepare it. This recipe is based upon one we've been making for decades from the original "The Vegetarian Epicure" by Anna Thomas, first published in 1972. I am sure many of you have some well-used recipes from this book as well. The pages in my copy are all stained, torn and tattered, but how I still love this cookbook!

Over the years, I have changed the recipe and now just oven roast all of the veggies together before stuffing them into the eggplant shells. The original recipe calls for cooking them in stages, and layering them into the shell, but I love them all mixed together anyway, kind of like a ratatouille. You can use any size eggplant you like, and it depends upon whether you want to serve this as a main or a side dish. I like to use a great big eggplant, and it serves two people nicely for an entrée. If you find smaller eggplants, they would make perfect sides. We

have also added cremini mushrooms, zucchini and shallots to the veggie assortment, because all of those flavors are so amazing when roasted together and they complement the wheat germ-Parmesan-walnut crust so well! Anyway . this is my version of the dish and if you'd like to see the original, pick up a copy of the book at a local book store or order on Amazon (link provided).

Just a fun little note, when I last made it, my husband said, "Nah, I don't like eggplant and that doesn't sound like something I'd like." I thought, great, all the more for me! But, then after tasting it as a side to some grilled salmon, he admitted how much he loved it and has since asked for it again. (So much for hogging the whole thing to myself.) I hope you love this as much as we do!

Stuffed Baked Eggplant

Serves 2 for a Main Meal

INGREDIENTS

Veggies:

1 large whole eggplant (cut in half lengthwise and remove the pulp with a knife or grapefruit spoon, leaving about 1/2-inch shell. Keep the skin on the shell. Save the eggplant you've removed from the shell to bake with the other veggies.)

1 medium zucchini, cut into bite-sized pieces

1 yellow onion, peeled and sliced or chopped

2 shallots, peeled and sliced lengthwise into long strips

2 cloves garlic, minced

6-8 medium-large cremini mushrooms, cut into quarters or sliced

12 cherry tomatoes

Salt, pepper and lemon pepper, to taste

Italian herbs, optional

2-3 tablespoons olive oil

Topping:

3/4 cup wheat germ

1 cup grated Parmesan

1 1/4 cup chopped walnuts

1 tablespoon melted butter

1/2 cup or so of milk or half and half (just enough to make a paste out of all of the crust ingredients.)

Mix all topping ingredients in a bowl and set aside until the veggies are ready to spread over the stuffed eggplant halves. If you find you need a little more liquid to get to a paste consistency, just add enough to make a thick paste.? If you have extra topping, save it and use it to top roasted tomatoes or any other veggie you like to roast. It's so delicious!

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400 F. Prepare a baking sheet that has 1-inch sides with cooking spray.

Spray or oil the bottom of a separate casserole dish and place the hollowed out eggplant shells with the cut side up, in the casserole dish. Set aside for now.

Toss all of the veggies except the cherry tomatoes, with the olive oil, salt, pepper and lemon pepper. You can also add Italian herbs if you like at this point.

Spread the seasoned veggies out on the prepared baking sheet. Roast for about 20-25 minutes, or until they begin to soften and just start to turn brown on the edges. Turn the veggies with a spatula about halfway through the cooking. Toss in the cherry tomatoes, and roast for another few minutes. Remove veggies from the oven.

Reduce oven temperature to 350 F.

Transfer the roasted veggies into the hollowed out eggplant shells. Fill the shells as full as you can. Spread the wheat germ-parmesan-nut topping over the top to cover the veggies in the eggplant. Bake for about 35 minutes, or until the crust is golden brown and the eggplant shell is cooked. Serve hot. You can eat the entire thing, shell and all!

NOTE: Here is a link to "The Vegetarian Epicure," if you decide you'd love to have a copy for yourself!
<https://www.amazon.com/Vegetarian-Epicure-262-Recipes/dp/0804170541>



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