

<b>08/11/11 - Eggplant Parmesan Salad</b>
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Everyone loves a decadent slice of eggplant parmesan with hot bubbly cheese oozing out layers of fried eggplant laced with marinara sauce, but how about a hot weather version that you could serve cold in salad form, for those dog days of August. This could be a main course salad or a starter salad to a lovely meal.

To make enough for 4 starter size salads you will need:

2 large Chinese eggplants

1 cup flour

½ teaspoon salt

3 eggs

1 (8 ounce) box Panko crumbs (I use Kikkoman brand)

Safflower oil for frying

4 cups wild arugula

2 large tomatoes

1 (8 ounce) container of fresh buffalo mozzarella, ciliegine (cherry size)

1 small clamshell plastic of mixed baby heirloom tomatoes, washed, cut in half

10 fresh basil leaves, cut chiffonade (in ribbons)

½ cup grated Parmesano Reggiano

Sea salt

Freshly ground pepper

1 lemon

Extra Virgin Olive Oil



Wash and dry eggplants. Slice eggplants on the diagonal creating  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick ovals. Preheat a 12 inch frying pan on medium heat. Place flour in a flat plate and mix with salt. Dredge eggplant slices in flour and set aside on a large piece of aluminum foil on counter. Beat eggs in a shallow dish. Pour panko crumbs onto a flat plate. Dip each slice of eggplant in beaten egg to coat and then into panko crumbs. Place each eggplant slice back onto foil until you dip all the slices in egg



Next, add safflower oil to preheated pan to a depth of about ¼ inch. Fry all eggplant slices on medium heat, turning only once until they are golden brown. This will probably take several pans full and you may need to add more oil. Use a tong to turn slices as piercing with a fork will result in oil foaming up and making a mess. Fry eggplant slices on medium so they have a chance to cook all the way through. As you remove golden slices from oil, place them on paper towel covered plates only one layer thick. Set eggplant slices aside while you prepare the rest of the



Divide arugula on four large salad plates. Wash and slice large tomatoes in ¼ inch rounds as for a sandwich. Fan out 4-6 fried eggplant slices over arugula. Place a slice of tomato in between each eggplant slice. Scatter about 5 ciliegine (mozzarella balls) around plate of salad. Scatter around a handful of heirloom tomatoes in different colors. Scatter basil chiffonade over the top. Sprinkle freshly grated Parmesano Reggiano over top of salad or grate cheese directly onto salad to your taste, and then, season salad with a bit of salt and pepper, to your taste.



For the very last thing, squeeze a bit of fresh lemon juice and drizzle a couple of teaspoons of extra virgin olive oil on top of salad. Serve

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