

Eggplant Involtini 12 Servings



3 to 4 large eggplants (aubergine/melanzane)
Salt and freshly ground pepper
2 cups (8 oz) whole-milk ricotta cheese
1/2 lb fresh mozzarella cheese, shredded
8 – 10 tablespoons grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
cheese

6 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro
Olive oil for brushing
2 1/2 cups {20 fl oz} tomato sauce (Prego with
meat)
1/2 cup breadcrumbs

MAKIES 12 SERVINGS

Trim 1/2-inch from the ends of the eggplants, then cut lengthwise 7/16" inch thick (see wooden shim; use the restaurant's electric meat slicer, make sure that the eggplant is positioned to slice its entire length). Salt the slices generously on both sides and place in a colander (I will bring one) for 1/2 hour to drain.

Meanwhile, in a bowl, stir together the ricotta, mozzarella, 8 tablespoons of the Parmigiano-Reggiano, the cilantro, the 1/2 cup breadcrumbs and pepper to taste.

Position a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat to 450°F.

Rinse the eggplant slices quickly under cold running water and dry them with paper or cloth towels. Brush the slices on both sides with olive oil, and arrange them in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet.

Bake the slices until lightly browned on the bottom, about 7 minutes. Turn the slices and continue to bake until browned on the second side and tender, 6 minutes longer. Remove the eggplant from the oven. Reduce the oven temperature to 350°F.

Spoon a thin layer of the tomato sauce into a 9-inch by 13-inch baking dish (see green pan with black interior) that has been brushed inside with olive oil. To make each eggplant roll, place a heaping tablespoonful of the cheese mixture near the wide end of a slice and roll up the slice. As it each roll is formed, place it seam side down in the dish. Spoon the remaining sauce over the rolls, then sprinkle evenly with the remaining 2 or more tablespoons Parmigiano-Reggianoⁱ.

Bake the rolls until the sauce is bubbling hot and the rolls are heated through, about 25 minutes. Divide the rolls among individual plates and serve at once.

ⁱ There will probably be a lot of the filling left over. Please put it in a styfoam to-go box, and will take it home. Using the surplus and adding breadcrumbs, I like to prepare poblano peppers, cut in half, seeded, seasoned with olive oil, pepper, garlic salt, and roast them