



Grilled Eggplant Pomodorini is a simple celebration of summer and features garden fresh ingredients including eggplant, tomatoes, onion, basil and garlic. Sarah Nasello / The Forum

Grilled Eggplant Pomodorini

Serves: 4 as a side dish or appetizer, or 1 to 2 as a vegan entree

Ingredients for the eggplant:

1 medium-large eggplant, sliced into ¼-inch rounds, skin on
Extra-virgin olive oil
½ teaspoon kosher salt
¼ teaspoon ground pepper

Ingredients for Pomodorini sauce:

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 small onion, thinly sliced (yellow, white or red all work), about 1/3 cup
1 large clove garlic, peeled and cut into halves or quarters
¼ cup dry white wine
1 pint cherry or grape tomatoes, halved or quartered (slice grape tomatoes lengthwise)
Pinch of kosher salt
Pinch of ground pepper
¼ cup water
Fresh basil, to taste (either small leaves or torn into pieces)

Directions:

To prepare the grill, clean off any grime, brush the grill with vegetable oil (to prevent the eggplant from sticking) and preheat on high to about 400 degrees.

Place the eggplant rounds on a baking sheet. Brush tops with extra-virgin olive oil, then sprinkle with salt and pepper; flip the eggplant rounds and repeat on the other side.

Place the eggplant rounds on the hot grill and cook over direct heat until grill marks are achieved on the bottoms, about 2 to 3 minutes. Flip eggplant rounds and repeat on the other side. Once grill marks are present on both sides, remove rounds from the grill and place on a baking sheet.

To prepare the Pomodorini sauce, in a medium pan, add the olive oil, onions and garlic and cook over medium-high heat until the onions are soft and translucent, about 5 to 6 minutes. Add the white wine and continue to cook over medium-high heat until the liquid reduces by at least half, about 2 minutes. Once reduced, you can remove the garlic chunks, if desired.

Add the tomatoes and sprinkle with a pinch of salt and pepper. Continue to cook over medium-high heat until the tomatoes just begin to break down, about 3 minutes. Reduce the heat to the lowest setting and let the tomatoes simmer until the juices are released and the skin is split and blistered, about 10 to 12 minutes.

Add the water and fresh basil leaves and increase the heat to medium; cook until the sauce is thick enough to coat the back of a spoon, about 3 to 4 minutes. Taste and add seasoning as desired.

On a serving platter or plates, create eggplant towers by stacking 3 or 4 slices, and then spoon the sauce generously over each tower.

Sarah's Notes:

- To serve the dish completely hot, grill the eggplant as the tomatoes are simmering.
- The eggplant can be prepared up to 3 days before using, and reheated or served at room temperature.
- The sauce can be prepared up to 2 days in advance, and reheated or served at room temperature.
- The sauce would also be great over grilled bread, fish and chicken.
- For another variation, place slices of fresh mozzarella between each layer of eggplant.

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"Home with the Lost Italian" is a weekly column written by Sarah Nasello featuring recipes by her husband, Tony Nasello. The couple owned Sarello's in Moorhead and lives in Fargo with their son, Giovanni. Readers can reach them at sarahnasello@gmail.com.