

# Vegetable Main Dish Recipes Vol. 10

## Many People Love Eggplant!

### You Can Enjoy Eggplant All Different Ways —Baked, Fried, Steamed

Eggplant is available all over the world, in many varieties. There are distinct types even in Japan. Each type has different characteristics. This issue introduces recipes using the most popular variety available in Japan: the long and slender ones. By Makiko Hei

#### Nutritional value of eggplant

When we say “eggplant,” we think of the characteristic bright purple skin. This color is due to nasunin (polyphenol), which is reported to have benefits in boosting the immune system as well as anti-aging and cancer prevention properties. Try to eat the whole thing without peeling off the skin. Even if you peel off the skin before cooking, don’t throw it away, but stir fry it and eat it!

It is hard to image from its soft texture, but eggplant is surprisingly rich in dietary fiber. They not only protect the intestinal environment, but also curb elevated blood-sugar levels and lowers blood cholesterol. So they are highly recommended to help prevent adult-onset diseases such as myocardial infarction and diabetes.

In addition, eggplants contain potassium, which helps the body excrete excessive salt and water content. That means they can reduce swelling and prevent high blood pressure.

#### Tips for preparation

Once you cut eggplant, you need to expose it to water to prevent bitterness and discoloration unique to eggplant.

However, the water can also remove nutrients such as nasunin and potassium, so don’t leave the pieces in water for more than 10 minutes or so.

When frying or stir-frying eggplants in oil, you may

not notice the bitterness and discoloration if you cook them immediately after cutting. In this case, you don’t need to put them in water first.

#### How to keep eggplant fresh

Eggplants prefer high temperature and high humidity, so the seeds will turn black if they are refrigerated for a long time. This makes them more susceptible to damage. The best way to store eggplants is to wrap them in newspaper to prevent exposure to air and then store them at room temperature or in the refrigerator’s vegetable compartment, and use them within a few days of purchase. You can keep eggplants in the freezer for about a month after you cut them into pieces, whatever size you prefer, and then stir-fry, bake, or steam them. Do not defrost them before cooking.



# Eggplant mille-feuille

Eggplant mingling with the savory taste of tomato and pork is a delicious dish that requires little seasoning

**Cooking time: 30 minutes**

**[Ingredients]** 4 servings  
(in a heatproof loaf pan)

3 eggplants  
1 tomato  
10 perilla leaves  
200g sliced boneless pork ribs or bellies  
1 tablespoon cooking sake (a teaspoon per eggplant)  
1 tablespoon soy sauce (a teaspoon per eggplant)  
1 tablespoon sesame oil (a teaspoon per eggplant)  
Grated radish (drain lightly) to taste  
White radish sprouts to taste  
Ponzu sauce to taste



## [How to cook]

1. Cut off the tips of the eggplants and slice them vertically to 4mm-thickness. Cut off the top of the tomato, cut in half, and slice to 5mm thickness. Cut the stems off the perilla leaves and cut each leaf vertically in half. Cut the pork crosswise in half. Cut white radish sprouts to bite size, and mix them with the grated radish.
2. Place the ingredients—(1) eggplant, pork, perilla leaves, and tomato in order—all over the container, and sprinkle on cooking sake, soy sauce, and sesame oil.
3. Put (2) into the pre-heated steamer and cook it over high heat for 20 minutes.
4. Cut into appropriate sizes inside the container, serve them in a bowl, add (1) grated radish, and ponzu sauce if desired.



## Tips

- If a steamer is not available, lightly cover (2) with cling wrap, and heat in a microwave oven at 600W for 8~10 minutes.
- If an appropriate container is not available, use a cooking vat that will fit inside the steamer. Layer each slice of eggplant, tomato, pork, and perilla, and fix them with 1 or 2 toothpicks, put them in the cooking vat vertically (see the image), and then put the vat into the steamer.



## Eggplant and roasted tofu

A tasty mix of the meat-like flavors of roasted tofu and juicy eggplants

**Cooking time: 30 minutes**

### [Ingredients]

Easy-to-cook quantity (2~3 servings)

3 eggplants

1 block of cotton tofu (350g)

1 tablespoon sesame oil

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon soy source

Chopped green onion to taste

Roasted white sesame seeds to taste



### [How to cook]

1. Cut off the tip of the eggplants, and cut into 1cm-squares, leaving skin on.
2. Heat sesame oil in a frying pan, add tofu, and break it into bite-size pieces with a spatula. Cook over high heat, mixing occasionally. Add (1) eggplants, and thoroughly cook them over high heat until the liquid runs out (About 10 minutes).
3. Season with salt and soy sauce. Add sesame oil (excluding the amount used above) last, and stir it around in the pan for a savory touch.
4. Serve in a bowl and sprinkle with a of green onion, and then top with sesame seeds.

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### Tips

- The tofu will break up into smaller pieces as you stir it, so try to maintain bite-sized pieces as you break it up with the spatula.
- A delicious way to enjoy this dish is to put it on top of rice, as shown in the photo.



### Profile

#### Makiko Hei

I love vegetables. I try to handle them with care and cook them simply but luxuriously, with the motto "Let's make our daily meals delicious regardless of the genre of the dishes."

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