

Chicken and Eggplant Parmesan (for 4)

Recipe Cookbook: Food and Wine Quick from Scratch

Chapter: Chicken and Other Birds

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Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 32 minutes

INGREDIENTS:

1 eggplant, about 1 pound, cut into 1/4" rounds

4 TBS olive oil

1 tsp salt

Fresh ground black pepper

1 lb boneless skinless chicken breasts (about 3)

2 C canned crushed tomatoes in thick purée

1/2 lb Mozzarella cheese, cut into thin slices

1/3 C grated Parmesan cheese

1/4 C fresh basil leaves, lightly packed (If basil isn't in season, don't use dried

basil - substitute 1 teaspoon dried marjoram instead – add to tomato sauce with the salt)

DIRECTIONS:

Heat broiler. Arrange eggplant in a single layer on large baking sheet. Coat both sides of eggplant with 2 1/2 TBS oil & sprinkle with 1/2 tsp salt & 1/4 tsp pepper. Broil, turning once, till browned (about 5 minutes per side). Turn off broiler & heat oven to 425 °F.

In a large nonstick frying pan, heat 1 TBS oil over moderately high heat. Season chicken with 1/4 tsp salt & 1/8 tsp pepper - add to pan & cook chicken 2 minutes per side & take from pan. When cool enough to handle, cut chicken crosswise into 1/4" slices.

Oil an 8" square baking dish. Put 1/3 of the eggplant in a single layer in dish. Top with half the chicken, half the tomatoes, half the Mozzarella, 1/3 of the Parmesan, half the basil + remaining 1/4 tsp salt. Repeat with another third of the eggplant, the remaining chicken, tomatoes & Mozzarella, another third of the Parmesan, and remaining basil. Top with remaining eggplant & sprinkle with remaining cheese. Drizzle with remaining 1/2 TBS oil. Bake 20 minutes & let sit 5 minutes before cutting.

Wine: *An Italian red wine (such as a reasonably priced nebbiolo from either the Piedmont or Lombardy region) has plenty of acidity & body for the rich taste of this dish.*