

Burrata with Roasted Eggplant and Green Beans

This satisfying dish mixes a smooth, soft Italian cheese with Japanese eggplant offering more texture when roasted due to its thin shape. Think Stan Laurel rather than the Oliver Hardy roundness of the Italian variety. The eggplant skin caramelizes as it roasts, while the interior loses its moisture and becomes creamy. Pour a Sangiovese wine if it's dinner and a movie night, or toast a special occasion with Prosecco.



Ingredient list for 4 servings

8 garlic cloves - smashed and peeled
2/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil - divided
1 1/4 pounds Japanese eggplant - cut into 1" pieces
4 plum tomatoes - quartered lengthwise and cut into 1" pieces
1 pound green beans - trimmed
1/4 cup kalamata olives - pitted and sliced
1 tablespoon capers - drained
1/4 cup fresh mint - torn
1/4 cup fresh basil - torn
2 teaspoons red wine vinegar, more as needed
Sea salt - to taste
Black pepper - to taste
12 ounces burrata - drained and brought up to room temperature
Crusty bread, toasted or grilled, for serving



- Make garlic oil: Place garlic cloves in a small pot and cover with 1/3 cup olive oil. Place over very low heat and cook gently until soft and pale golden, 10 to 15 minutes. Let cool. Mash garlic with a fork, then strain the oil into a jar or little bowl, pressing hard on the solids. See Note below.

- Heat oven to 450° F. Pat eggplant with paper towels to remove any excess liquid. Toss eggplant with remaining 1/3 cup olive oil and spread out on one or two rimmed baking sheets so the pieces aren't touching. (This makes for the best browning.) Roast, tossing once or twice, until golden brown, 20 to 30 minutes. Transfer eggplant to a bowl and toss with tomatoes and 3 tablespoons garlic oil.
- Steam green beans in a medium saucepan until just tender, 3 to 6 minutes depending on their size and thickness. Drain well under cold running water. Cut into 1-inch pieces; add to bowl of eggplant.
- Toss olives, capers, mint, basil, vinegar and a little more garlic oil into salad. Season with salt and pepper.
- Place cheese in the center of a serving platter and surround with veggies. Drizzle with more garlic oil if you like, and sprinkle with more sea salt. Serve with crusty bread.

Notes: Burrata is an Italian cow or buffalo milk cheese made from mozzarella with a creamy center.

Use the solids from making the garlic oil [AKA garlic confit] as a spread for bread or keep to mix into vinaigrettes or marinades. It will keep for at least a week in the refrigerator.)