

Roasted Eggplant with Pomegranate & Buttermilk Sauce

Adapted from Plenty, by Yotam Ottolenghi
Serves 4 as a starter, or 2 as a main dish:

Ingredients

2 long and large eggplants
1/3 cup olive oil
1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme leaves
kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
seeds from one large (heavy) pomegranate
1 teaspoon za'atar seasoning

Buttermilk Yogurt Sauce:

1/4 cup buttermilk
1/2 cup nonfat Greek yogurt
1 small garlic clove, pressed
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus more to drizzle as garnish

Maldon sea salt
thyme sprigs for garnish

Preparation

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Slice the eggplants in half lengthwise, from stem to core.

Use knife to score flesh of each half on diagonal in one direction and then other to form diamond pattern.

Be careful not to pierce skin.

Place eggplant halves, cut side up, on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.

Brush liberally with olive oil, until flesh has absorbed oil.

Sprinkle with chopped thyme and season with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Place baking sheet in oven and roast for 35 to 40 minutes, until eggplant is tender and golden.

Let cool completely.

Cut the pomegranate in half horizontally.

Hold one half, cut side down, in your hand over a bowl.

Using the back of a wooden spoon, knock against skin of pomegranate to release seeds into the bowl.

If seeds are stubborn, cut pomegranate in quarters and coax remaining seeds out with your fingers.

Sift through seeds to remove any membrane or white skin that may fallen in.

Make Buttermilk Sauce: in a medium bowl, mix together buttermilk and Greek yogurt.
Press a garlic clove through a press and add to the bowl.
Whisk in extra virgin olive oil and season to taste with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper.
Chill in the refrigerator until needed.

Place eggplant halves on a serving platter.
Top each half generously with a layer of sauce.
Drizzle with za'atar seasoning, pomegranate seeds and a light sprinkling of Maldon sea salt.

Finish dish by garnishing with sprigs of thyme and a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil before serving.

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