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SOUPS & STEWS Kyma

Kyma's eggplant stew with onions and tomato sauce

By Sarra Sedghi · Rough Draft Atlanta, 11/26/2025

Serves 4

Ingredients

- [ ] 1/2 cup (125 ml) canola oil
- [ ] 1 1/2 pounds (750 g) small Japanese eggplants, sliced crosswise on the diagonal 3/4 inch (2 cm) thick
- [ ] Kosher salt and freshly ground white pepper to taste
- [ ] 4 thyme sprigs
- [ ] 4 garlic cloves, crushed
- [ ] 1 medium Vidalia (sweet) onion, halved and thinly sliced
- [ ] 1 cup (250 ml) Greek tomato sauce
- [ ] Chopped parsley for garnish (optional)

Directions

1. **Make the eggplant:** Heat the oven to 300°F (150°C). Line a baking sheet with paper towels.
2. In a large skillet, warm 3 tablespoons of the oil. Add half of the eggplant slices, season with salt and pepper, and cook over medium heat, turning occasionally, until browned and tender, 12 to 15 minutes.
3. Add 2 thyme sprigs and 2 garlic cloves, toss with the eggplant to mix, and cook, stirring, for 30 seconds. Transfer the eggplant to the prepared baking sheet; discard the thyme and garlic. Repeat with 3 tablespoons of the oil and the remaining eggplant, thyme, and garlic.
4. **Add the onion:** In the same skillet, warm the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil. Add the onion, season with salt and pepper, and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned, 12 to 15 minutes. Remove the skillet from the heat.

5. **Layer and bake:** In a medium baking pan, spread 1⁄4 cup (60 ml) of the tomato sauce. Layer one-third of the onions, one-third of the eggplant, and 1⁄4 cup (60 ml) of the tomato sauce on top and repeat two more times, finishing with the tomato sauce.
6. Cover with a lid or foil and bake until very hot, about 20 minutes.
7. Let stand for 5 minutes, then garnish with parsley, if desired, and serve hot, warm, or at room temperature.

The story

This week, per a Rough Draft reader request, we're sharing Kyma's recipe for its eggplant stew with onions and tomato sauce.

Kyma Chef Pano Karatassos said that eggplant stew has thousands of years of history — the vegetable originated in East and South Asia and traveled westward over time. Karatassos added that Greeks consider this stew a main dish.

"Greeks don't eat protein every night," he said. "Traditionally, the diet centers on vegetarian dishes most days, with fish a couple of times a week, chicken once a week, and red meat only about once a month."

The Greek island Ikaria is one of the world's five blue zones, where people live longer-than-average lives, so clearly the traditional Mediterranean diet is doing something right.

At Kyma, however, eggplant stew is served as a meze or a side. Karatassos recommends pairing the stew with bread and cheese, or cheese saganaki (flaming Greek cheese). If you'd rather have the stew as a side, Karatossos suggests pairing it with grilled steaks, lamb chops, salmon, or snapper.

This recipe calls for Greek tomato sauce, which can either be purchased at a specialty market or online. Karatassos' cookbook, "Modern Greek Cooking," also includes his recipe for the eggplant stew.

"When cooking eggplant, remember that it will absorb as much oil as you give it," Karatassos said. "For first-timers, the key is to add the oil gradually as you cook. Feed the oil to the pan, not directly to the eggplant, until you achieve the color and texture you want."

While the Kyma recipe is written as part of a main course, it can be adjusted for a meze. Karatassos recommends splitting the ingredients between two 4 1⁄2-inch (10.5 cm) round shallow baking pans to make the stew feel more like a meze.

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