



## Eggplant 101

Dani Spies shares everything you need to know about selecting, storing, and preparing eggplant so that you feel confident enough to use this yummy veggie in your kitchen tonight!

Figuring out how to select and prepare eggplant can be a little bit intimidating, so watch how Dani shares her key insights. By the end of the video, it will feel totally approachable.

### Varieties and characteristics

There are a handful of varieties of eggplant out there. For today we are looking at the most common, which is called Globe or American eggplant. This is the variety that you see most often and are likely familiar with. Eggplant is a fairly large, pear-shaped veggie, and it has this beautiful, deep, rich purple skin. Once you cut into it, the flesh is this lovely cream color. Nutritionally speaking, eggplant is high in fiber, packed with nutrients, and it is low in calories. So it would be a great addition to any type of diet.

### How to select a great one

Eggplant is available at the grocery store all year round, but its prime time is August-October. As you know, when we buy produce during its prime season, we get the best cost, the highest nutritional value - and most importantly, the best flavor.

When you're shopping for eggplant, you want it to feel a little bit heavy for its size, and it should have a nice shiny, even skin - no bruising or discoloration. Check the green cap on top. If it's really fresh, it'll even have a green stem.

How can you tell if it is ripe? Just take your finger and gently push onto the skin. If it bounces back, then you know it's ripe. If the indentation stays there, it will need a few more days to ripen.

### How to store it

All you need to do is wrap it tightly in a plastic bag, and then put it in the fridge. When you're ready to use it, it will be ready for you.

## How to cook it

When you're ready to use your eggplant, first give it a good rinse under some cold water. Conventionally-grown eggplants have a wax on them to give them a longer shelf life, but organic eggplants do not. So if you don't have an organic eggplant, you may want to peel off the skin. But if you don't have to, you don't want to, because this skin is packed with nutrients.

When you're ready to cut into your eggplant, lay it on the cutting board and then slice off both ends. Then, cut it into about ¼ to ½-inch slices.

Eggplant holds a lot of water, and if you cook it as-is, it can be a little bit tough or a little bit bitter. So the secret to a nice, sweet, creamy, nutty eggplant is salting.

Once you have your eggplant all laid out, you just want to sprinkle each piece with a little bit of kosher salt. Then, lay them down into your colander, salt-side down, sprinkle the opposite side. You can pile them up! Once all your eggplant is salted and in the colander, just put the colander over a bowl to catch the water, and place something nice and heavy right over the top. A teapot works perfectly.

The salt helps to draw the excess moisture out of the eggplant, and the teapot helps to squish it all out. You can leave it here anywhere from a half hour to an hour and a half, depending on how much time you have. Once the time has passed, you'll see that there's a little bit of water at the bottom of your bowl. That's what came out of the eggplant, and the slices will now be thinner - all the water came out of them. Then, lay them onto a kitchen towel. Pat off any excess moisture on the skin and they are ready to go.

Eggplant slices are great if you want to make eggplant parmesan, or if you threw them on the grill.

But if you are going to sauté them or roast them, pile them up and cut them into a 1-inch dice. One of Dani's favorite quick ways to make eggplant is to sauté it with some onions and garlic, and then, when it's done, sprinkle it with fresh mint and feta cheese.

The one thing you want to keep in mind when you're working with eggplant is that it is like a big sponge. So go light on the oil, because as much oil as you give, it's going to absorb. Try subbing in a little bit of broth instead.

So now that you know what to do with eggplant get in your kitchens and come up with some delicious eggplant recipes of your own.

## Bonus Items

If you want to watch the video again, click [here](#).