

Easy Eggplant Bolognese (1 Pot!)

Prep: 15 minutes • Cook: 30 minutes

A bright, tomato-forward vegan bolognese where tender, sautéed eggplant creates a hearty, meaty texture, balanced with Italian herbs, gentle heat, and a creamy finish from dairy-free milk.

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 cup yellow onion (finely chopped)
- 1/2 cup carrots (finely diced)
- 4 cups eggplant (diced, 1/4-inch cubes (about 1 medium; ~345 g))
- 4 cloves garlic (minced or pressed)
- 1/2 tsp red pepper flakes
- 2 Tbsp tomato paste
- 1/2 cup dry red or white wine (optional; or substitute vegetable broth or water)
- 1 (28-oz) can crushed tomatoes (optionally with basil)
- 1 cup dairy-free milk (unsweetened, unflavored; cashew recommended (dairy also works))
- 1-2 tsp dried Italian seasoning (or use dried basil + oregano)
- 1/2 tsp sea salt (plus more to taste)
- 1-2 tsp maple syrup
- to taste fresh basil (freshly chopped; optional, for serving)
- to taste vegan parmesan cheese (optional, for serving (dairy also works))
- as needed pasta (pappardelle or rigatoni; gluten-free as needed; optional for serving)

Instructions

1. Heat a large pot over medium heat. Once warm, add the olive oil and onion. Sauté until translucent, about 5 minutes, then add the finely diced carrots and continue cooking until the onion takes on some color and the carrots soften.
2. Add the eggplant and cook for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until softened and beginning to brown. If the mixture looks dry, cover, reduce heat to low, and let the eggplant steam briefly.
3. Stir in the garlic and red pepper flakes and sauté for 1–2 minutes, until fragrant.
4. Add the tomato paste and cook, stirring frequently, to remove the raw tomato flavor and prevent scorching.
5. Optionally deglaze the pan with the wine (or broth/water), stirring to loosen the browned bits from the bottom.
6. When the liquid has mostly evaporated and the pan looks dry, add the crushed tomatoes, dairy-free milk, Italian seasoning, sea salt, and maple syrup. Stir to combine.
7. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer for at least 20–30 minutes, stirring occasionally. For deeper flavor,

simmer up to 1 hour, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking or burning.

8. Taste and adjust, adding more salt for overall flavor, more maple syrup to balance acidity, or a splash of dairy-free milk for richness.

9. Serve over hearty noodles like pappardelle or rigatoni (or spaghetti). Garnish with fresh basil and vegan parmesan, if desired.

10. Store leftover sauce and pasta separately in airtight containers. Refrigerate sauce up to 3–4 days or freeze up to 1 month; reheat gently on the stovetop over low–medium heat.

Tags: Vegan, Italian Inspired, Eggplant, One Pot, Pasta Sauce, Dairy Free

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