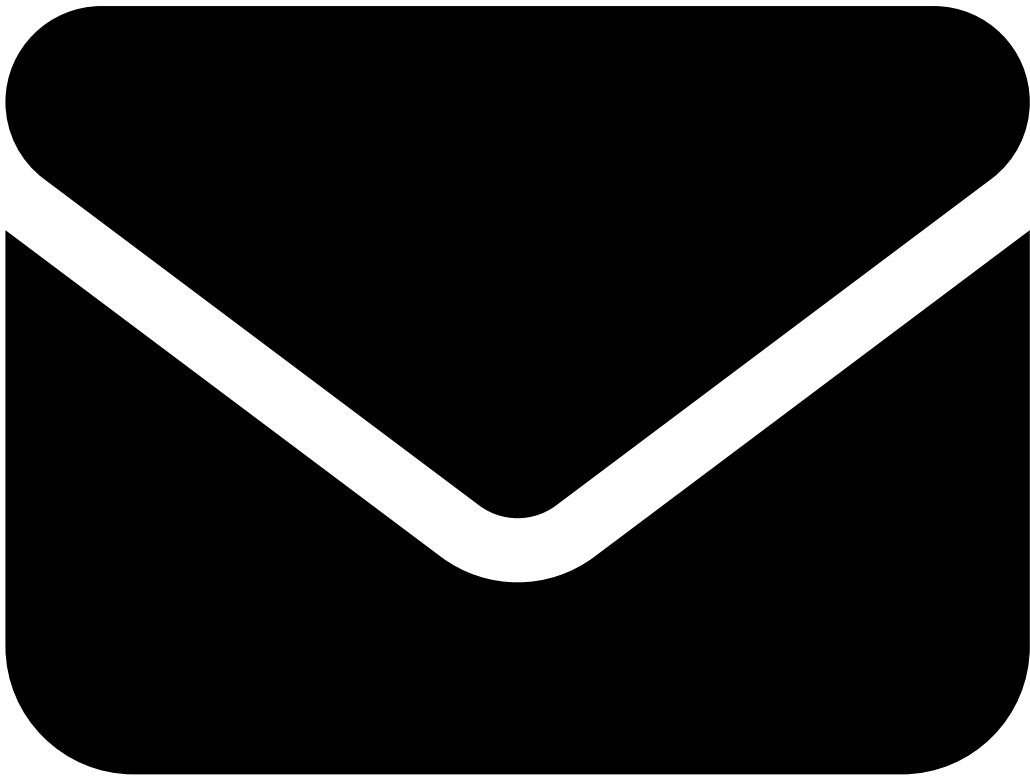


Traditional Melanzane a Funghetto (Neapolitan Eggplant with Tomatoes)

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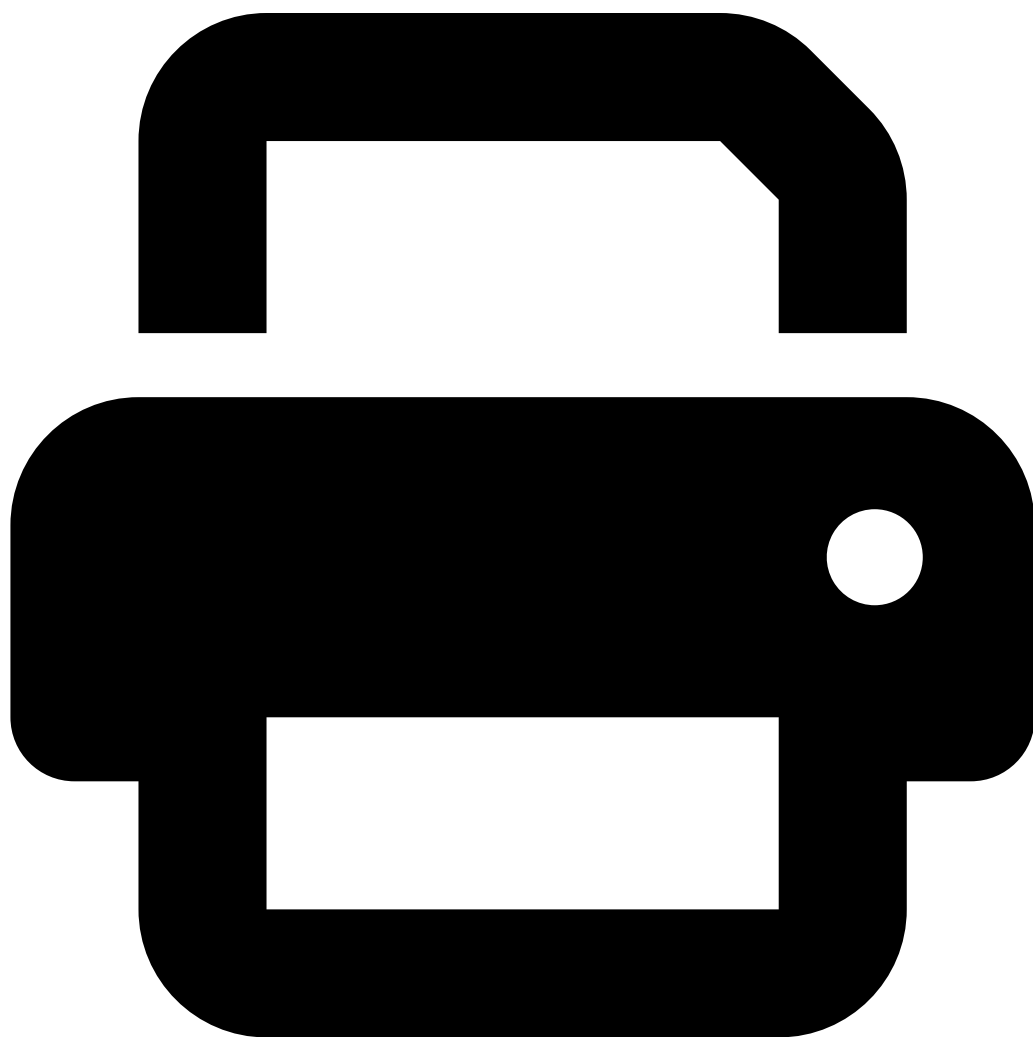
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Some of the best Italian recipes are the ones you've probably never heard of. **Melanzane a Funghetto** is a traditional Neapolitan dish that transforms humble ingredients—eggplant, tomatoes, garlic, fresh basil, and extra virgin olive oil—into something incredibly rich and flavorful. The name translates to **“mushroom-style eggplant,”** referring to the way the tender cubes of eggplant resemble sautéed mushrooms as they cook.

Although I was born in Italy, I didn't grow up eating this particular dish. One of the things I love most about Italian cuisine is that every region has its own traditions and family recipes, many of which are virtually unknown outside their hometowns. Discovering dishes like this reminds me that Italian cooking is wonderfully regional, with every recipe telling the story of the place it comes from.

This authentic Neapolitan recipe is proof that you don't need complicated ingredients to make an unforgettable meal. Serve

it with crusty Italian bread, alongside grilled meats or fish, or toss it with pasta for a simple dinner that tastes like summer in southern Italy.

Things to know about this Neapolitan Eggplant with Tomato recipe

- **Choose firm, glossy eggplants** for the best texture. Smaller Italian eggplants tend to have fewer seeds and less bitterness.
- **Use ripe summer tomatoes** whenever possible. Fresh San Marzano or Roma tomatoes create the sweetest, richest sauce.
- **Don't rush the browning. use the right size pan** Let the eggplant caramelize before adding the tomatoes. This develops the deep flavor that makes the dish special.
- **Fresh basil is essential.** Stir it in at the end so it stays bright and fragrant.
- **It gets even better overnight.** The flavors meld beautifully, making leftovers just as delicious.
- **Serve it warm or at room temperature.** That's how it's often enjoyed in southern Italy.

▪ Storage

Refrigerator:

Store leftover **Melanzane a Funghetto** in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to **4 days**. The flavors continue to develop as it sits, making it even more delicious the next day.

Freezer:

Allow the dish to cool completely, then transfer it to a freezer-safe container. Freeze for up to **3 months**. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator before reheating.

Reheating:

Warm gently in a skillet over medium-low heat or in the microwave until heated through. If the sauce has thickened, add a splash of water or a drizzle of olive oil to loosen it.

Chef's Tip:

This dish is also wonderful served at **room temperature**, just as it's often enjoyed in southern Italy. It's perfect as part of an antipasto platter or spooned over toasted Italian bread.

More Traditional Italian Vegetable Recipes

If you enjoyed this recipe, be sure to try:

- **Ciambotta** (Italian Zucchini and Potato Stew) A rustic southern Italian vegetable stew made with zucchini, potatoes, tomatoes, eggplant, and fresh herbs that's perfect for summer.
- **Italian Marinated Fried Zucchini** (Zucchini alla Scapece) Crispy fried zucchini marinated with garlic, vinegar, mint, and olive oil for a classic Neapolitan side dish.
- **Calabrian Zucchini Fritters** – Golden, crispy zucchini fritters from Calabria made with simple pantry ingredients and full of authentic Italian flavor.
- **Eggplant Parmigiana** – Layers of tender eggplant, rich tomato sauce, mozzarella, and Parmesan baked until bubbly and golden.
- **Pasta alla Norma** – Sicily's famous pasta dish featuring fried eggplant, tomato sauce, fresh basil, and salty ricotta salata for the perfect summer meal.

Melanzane a Funghetto (Neapolitan Eggplant with Tomatoes)



Melanzane a Funghetto is a traditional Neapolitan eggplant recipe made with tender eggplant, ripe tomatoes, garlic, fresh basil, and extra virgin olive oil. This simple, rustic Italian side dish is full of authentic Mediterranean flavor and can be served with crusty bread, grilled meats, or tossed with pasta for an easy meal.

- 2 medium zebra peeled eggplants (about 2 pounds), cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil (plus more if needed)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 1/2 lb. ripe Roma or San Marzano tomatoes, diced (or one 28-ounce can whole San Marzano tomatoes, crushed by hand)
- 8-10 leaves fresh basil torn
- 1 tsp red pepper flakes (optional)
- salt and pepper to taste

1. Prepare the eggplant

Cut the eggplant into 1-inch cubes. If your eggplant is very mature or bitter, sprinkle it with salt and let it

sit in a colander for 30 minutes. Rinse and pat dry.

2. **Brown the eggplant**

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat.

Add the eggplant in a single layer and cook for about 10–12 minutes, stirring occasionally, until browned and tender. If the pan becomes dry, drizzle in a little more olive oil.

3. **Build the sauce**

Reduce the heat to medium.

Add the garlic and cook for about 30 seconds until fragrant.

Stir in the tomatoes, salt, black pepper, and red pepper flakes if using.

Simmer for 12–15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the tomatoes break down and coat the eggplant.

4. **Finish**

Turn off the heat and stir in the fresh basil.

Taste and adjust the seasoning.

Serve warm or at room temperature with crusty Italian bread, grilled meat, or spooned over pasta.

Side Dish

Italian

Melanzane a Funghetto Neapolitan Eggplant Recipe