

Eggplant Spread

1 pound eggplant

olive oil for frying

2 tsp. paprika

1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper

1 tsp. ground cumin

4 cloves garlic, peeled and finely chopped (I use 6)

1/3 cup olive oil (I fry the eggplant in a generous amount of oil and I do not add this additional amount)

3 Tablespoons lemon juice (I use 2)

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Tablespoon finely chopped Italian parsley

Stripe the eggplants by peeling alternate 1/2-inch strips of the purple skin, lengthwise, using a potato peeler.

Cut the eggplants into 1/2-inch round slices. Rub each one with salt and place them in a colander for 20-30 minutes to drain off their bitter juices, then wash and pat them dry.

Heat the olive oil in a large non-stick skillet, and fry the eggplant slices, a few at a time, until they are nicely browned on each side. Remove them from the oil, drain on paper towels and set them aside to cool. Discard the oil and clean the skillet. When they have cooled, chop the slices coarsely, place them in a bowl and mix well with the spices and garlic.

Return the eggplant to the skillet (without adding any oil), and cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, until most of the liquid is evaporated. Tip the eggplant into a bowl, add the 1/3 cup olive oil (I do not add this), the lemon juice, and seasoning to taste. place in the refrigerator to cool.