

Imam Bayildi

This is a well-known Turkish dish using aubergines, tomatoes and onions. The name translates as "The imam fainted". Reputedly, when an imam's wife served him this dish, he fainted because she had used up all their olive oil in making it. This version is from the food.com (<https://www.food.com/recipe/imam-bayildi-a-stuffed-eggplant-recipe-from-asia-minor-84776>).

Ingredients

2 medium	onions, <i>chopped</i>	
120–180 ml	olive oil	
2 cloves	garlic, <i>crushed</i>	
3 medium	tomatoes, <i>peeled and chopped</i>	
4 tbsp	parsley, <i>chopped</i>	
1 tbsp	fresh mint, <i>chopped</i> ¹	salt and pepper
2 medium	aubergines	
1 tsp	sugar	
2 tbsp	lemon juice	

Method

Preheat oven to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4.

Sauté the onions in a little oil. Add the garlic, tomatoes, parsley, salt, and pepper. Cook until it comes together as a very thick stew (no liquid). Stir in mint.

Cut the stem ends from each aubergine and cut them in half lengthwise. Make 3 lengthwise slits, almost from end to end, cutting into the flesh about 1 inch deep.

Heat 1/2 cup olive oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the aubergine, cut side down, and fry gently, until dark golden-brown on cut side. Turn over and fry on skin side a couple more minutes. Remove from oil (most of it will have been absorbed) and place on paper towels to drain for at least 15 minutes before proceeding with recipe (this gets rid of most of the oil — you can omit the frying step to cut calories and save time, but you will NOT have the same flavourful results, and the recipe will not be as authentic).

Hold each slit apart and spoon the vegetable mixture into each cavity. Arrange eggplants in a baking dish just large enough to hold them. Sprinkle with sugar, lemon juice, and drizzle with the remaining oil. Bake for 40 minutes, or until tender.

Serve with lots of crusty bread.

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1. 1 tsp of crumbled dried mint can be substituted.