

Eggplant with Pomegranate Spread

Makes 4 servings
Preparation time: 5 minutes
Cooking time: 1 hour 20 minutes

3 medium eggplants (2 pounds)
½ cup olive oil
2 medium onions, peeled and finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, crushed, peeled and chopped
1 medium tomato, peeled and diced
1 tablespoon pomegranate molasses or ½ cup verjuice (*ab-ghureh*, unripe grape juice)*
2 teaspoons sea salt
½ teaspoon freshly ground

black pepper
1 teaspoon angelica powder (*gol-par*)
1 teaspoon grape molasses or brown sugar
½ cup chopped fresh mint or 2 teaspoons dried mint

GARNISH
sprigs of mint
lavash or pita bread
fresh basil

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1. Preheat oven to 500°F (260°C). Prick eggplants with a fork to prevent bursting and place on oven rack. Bake for 40 minutes. Be sure to put a tray under the eggplants to catch drips.
2. Place the eggplants on a cutting board and let stand until cool enough to handle. Peel, seed, and chop finely.
3. In a wide skillet, heat the oil and sauté the onion and garlic until golden. Add the eggplants, tomato, pomegranate molasses, salt, pepper, angelica powder, grape molasses, and mint. Cover and simmer over low heat for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Adjust seasoning to taste.
4. Transfer to a deep serving dish, garnish with sprigs of mint and place the serving dish in a platter. Surround with toasted flat breads, such as *lavash* or pita, and fresh herbs. This recipe can be made 24 hours in advance and served warm or at room temperature. *Nush-e Jan!*



First millennium BCE bas-relief of men carrying offerings of pomegranates and wheat.