

# centerpiece

## AUBERGINE PASTA TOSS

*Note: This serves two as a main or four as a side. Simply double the recipe for a bigger crowd.*

2 good sized eggplants, cut into 1/2 inch slices  
1/4 cup olive oil  
3 cloves garlic, smashed  
2 tablespoons dried or fresh chopped oregano  
2-3 cups water or stock  
3 tablespoons sundried tomatoes, finely chopped  
a handful of basil leaves, chiffonaded  
red chili flakes  
salt and pepper  
1/2 pound spaghetti (half a package)  
freshly grated parmesan cheese for serving

Salt the slices of eggplant and let them sweat for about 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, put the olive oil in a big saucepan with the garlic cloves and cook over low heat. The idea is to get the garlic to flavor the oil, so be careful to keep the heat low so you don't burn or toast the garlic.

Dry the eggplant with a paper towel and cut it into 1/2 inch chunks. When the garlic has just begun to sizzle, add the eggplant and stir to coat the eggplant with oil and mix the garlic in.

Crank the heat to medium high and add oregano. When the eggplant begins to become translucent and soft, add about a cup of the liquid, let it come to a boil, and turn it back down to medium-low, stirring on occasion so that the bottom doesn't stick. Check the eggplant every so often and add more water as needed, up to about 3 cups.

In a separate pot, bring water to boil, salt it and cook your pasta until al dente.

After about 30 minutes the eggplant should start to break down. If it's super soft and easy to smash with the back of your spoon, mash it up. If not, add some more water and keep cooking until it's easy to mash.

Once you've got a smoothish consistency (keep it rustic, don't stress), add about two shakes of red chili flakes, salt and pepper to taste.

Drain the pasta and return it to the cooking pot with and toss with a big drizzle of olive oil. Add the basil, sundried tomatoes and the eggplant and toss.

Serve with a nice handful of fresh grated parmesan.

\*recipe modified from Francis Lam on Gourmet.com