

Eggplant



Selecting

Eggplants are available in variety of shapes, colours, sizes and weights. Eggplant contours can be round, egg-shaped, pear-shaped or elongated like cucumber. Colour possibilities include solids and gradients of white, purple, green, and orange-red. Sizes range greatly from small tomato-sized types, to hefty pear-shaped and elongated varieties.

The most common type in North America is dark purple and pear shaped and comes in a wide range of sizes. Also popular are Japanese eggplants, which are thinner and longer and have a milder, sweeter taste.

Look for an eggplant that is firm to the touch and has smooth skin. Choose ones that seem heavy for their size.

Storing

Store your eggplant wrapped in paper towel in a perforated bag. It will keep up to a week but best to use as soon after purchase as possible.

Preparing

How you prepare the eggplant will depend on the type. The typical North American eggplant may require peeling and salting to get rid of bitterness, but this helps reduce the amount of oil needed in cooking. Smaller eggplants and

Japanese eggplants are not as bitter and do not require the salting process.

When preparing the dark purple, North American variety, cut the eggplant into slices or cubes and sprinkle 1/2 teaspoon (2 mL) of salt per pound (500 g) of eggplant. Let it sit in a colander for about 30 minutes to sweat. Pat dry with paper towel or rinse quickly with water and pat dry.

Eggplants have a wonderful texture when cooked and can be used in a wide variety of recipes from dips to lasagna. They are also delicious when just roasted along with other vegetables.

Seasonality

Eggplants are available all year round. Eggplants that are grown locally are available in August, September and October.

Nutrition

One cup of cooked eggplant has only 36 calories. It contains fibre, potassium and folate. Eggplants also contain phytochemicals which have important disease fighting properties.



This Chopped Grilled Vegetable Salad is a great way to fill Half Your Plate with fruit and veggies.

www.halfyourplate.ca/recipe/grilled-chopped-vegetable-salad/

