

Rustic Eggplant Dip (Melanzanosalata)

Yield: approximately 2 cups

- 2 Small Eggplants (about 1 ½ pounds total)
- Avocado or other high heat oil
- 1 Tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ Cup finely diced fresh tomato (seeded if large)
- 2 Tablespoons minced onion
- 1 Tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
- 1 Teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 Teaspoon red wine vinegar
- 1 Teaspoon chopped fresh oregano
- 1 Teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
- 1 Teaspoon chopped fresh mint
- Salt and fresh ground pepper to taste



Prick the eggplants once with the tip of a paring knife to prevent them from swelling and exploding and rub all over with about 1 tablespoon of the oil. Heat grill to medium and grill eggplants, covered, turning every few minutes, until the eggplants are very soft inside and the skins are charred, 15-25 minutes. Let cool. (Alternately you can cook the eggplants in the oven or under the broiler, see instructions at bottom.)

Cut the stems off the eggplants and peel away the charred skin; discard the stems and skin. Coarsely chop the flesh and transfer it to a medium bowl. Add 1 tablespoon olive oil, the tomato, onion, parsley, lemon juice, vinegar, oregano, thyme, and mint. Mix well. Taste and season as desired with salt and pepper. Cover and refrigerate at least 4 hours before serving. Serve cool or at room temperature with fresh or toasted pita.

The eggplant can be cooked several hours or up to 2 days before making the salad. For best flavor, make the dip a day ahead.

To broil eggplants: Position rack 6 inches from boiler and heat to high. Line baking sheet with foil. Prick and oil eggplants as directed above. Place on baking sheet and broil, turning once, until the skin is charred in spots and flesh is tender, 20-25 minutes.

To roast eggplants: Position rack in center of oven and heat to 450 degF. Prick and oil eggplants as directed above. Roast until the skins are wrinkled and eggplant flesh is very soft, about 30 minutes.