



# Eggplant

**Fun Facts:** Fashionable high-society Chinese women used to use eggplant skins to stain their teeth black. The most common type of eggplant eaten in the U.S. is the large, dark-purple Italian eggplant. Less common are the slender lavender and small white types of eggplants. Eggplant is one of the least-frequently eaten vegetables in the U.S.

**Selecting Fresh Eggplant:** Look for a firm eggplant that is 6 to 8 inches long. Choose one with tender, smooth, glossy skin. Also look for one that, when it is gently pressed, yields to the pressure but the dent disappears. Look for an eggplant with an oval, not round, dimple at the blossom end. Select one where the stem and cap are still greenish and fresh-looking. Avoid eggplants that have hard flesh, as well as ones where the dent remains in the flesh after it is gently pressed, because it is likely to be brown and spongy inside, taste bitter, and have large tough seeds. Avoid those with a round dimple on the blossom end, since they may have more seeds and be spongier. Avoid eggplant that is dull, discolored, soft, shriveled or split. Avoid those with dark brown spots, which are a sign of decay.

## Measuring Fresh Eggplant:

- 1 medium eggplant = about 1 1/4 pounds as purchased = about 1 pound ready-to-cook = about 4 cups diced, raw or cooked
- 1/2 cup cooked = about 1 3/4 ounces by weight = about 50 grams



**Handling and Preserving:** Refrigerate unwashed eggplant in a perforated plastic bag in the vegetable drawer for up to 1 week. Handle gently to avoid bruises. It develops a bitter taste during storage in the refrigerator. **To freeze:** Rinse off dirt. Cut off ends. Peel if skin is tough. Dice, or slice into 1/3-inch thick rounds. Immediately place them in a mixture of 1 gallon boiling water with 1/2 cup lemon juice for 2 to 4 minutes. Remove and place in ice water for 2 to 4 minutes. Drain. Place in freezer bags, leaving 3 inches of air. Squeeze out the air, seal, date and freeze.

**Preparation and Serving:** Rinse off dirt. Cut off the ends. Peel if the skin is tough. Young tender eggplant may be cooked with the peel left on. Cook eggplant by baking, grilling, steaming or frying it. Use as directed in recipes, but do not overcook. Eggplant has a mild flavor that is enhanced by culinary herbs and other vegetables.

**Nutrition Facts** One serving = 1/2 cup steamed eggplant. It provides: Calories 13; Protein 1 gram; Carbohydrates 3 grams; Fat 0 grams.

**References:** [www.aboutproduce.com](http://www.aboutproduce.com); <http://aem.cornell.edu/research/researchpdf/rb0207.pdf>; ESHA Food Processor; Food for Fifty, 11<sup>th</sup> edition, 2001, by M. Molt, Prentice Hall; [www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/veggies](http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/veggies); [www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/FNTR2/MF1181.PDF](http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/FNTR2/MF1181.PDF)

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