

EGGPLANT PARMIGIANA

(from Jeff Mauro, as seen in The Kitchen)

1 medium to large eggplant
2 eggs, beaten with a teaspoon of water
salt and pepper
1/2 cup Panko breadcrumbs
1/4 cup grated Parmigiano cheese
1 to 2 tablespoons olive oil
tomato sauce
slices of mozzarella cheese

Heat a baking sheet – empty – in a very hot oven, 450 to 500F.

While the baking sheet is heating, peel the eggplant, cut crosswise in 1/2 inch slices. Reserve.

Put the eggs, water, salt and pepper in a small bowl and whisk to combine. Place the breadcrumb mixture in another bowl next to it. Dip each eggplant slice into the egg wash, but allow just one side to get wet with the mixture. Dip it in the breadcrumbs, pressing to coat, and carefully place on a rack with the crumb side up.

Make sure you have the tomato sauce warmed up and ready to go, and the cheese slices also nearby. Remove the baking sheet (careful, it's going to be very hot) and drizzle the olive oil to coat the hot surface. Working quickly, add the eggplant slices with the crumb down. It will stick to the oil and start to get pretty hot right away. Add the tomato sauce on top, cover with cheese, and place in the oven, reducing the temperature to 375 F.

Cook for 15 to 20 minutes. I added a little extra tomato sauce on top after 10 minutes. When the cheese is starting to get golden brown at the edges, the eggplant will be done. Serve right away with your favorite side dish.