

# Eggplant with Creole Seasoned Wild Rice Stuffing

Ingredients for 6 servings

- 2 large or 3 medium eggplants
- 1 cup wild rice, uncooked
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1 cup onion, fine dice
- 1 cup celery, fine dice
- 1 cup red bell pepper, fine dice
- Scooped out insides of eggplant, 1/2inch dice
- 1 tbsp salt
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 chipotle chili pepper, finely chopped
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 1 tbsp sweet paprika
- 4 cups vegetable stock
- 3 cups of French Bread, ½ inch dice, baked until well toasted, Toasting the bread cubes before adding them to the stuffing will help produce a crisper crust for the finished dish.
- ½ cup chopped celery leaves, or parley leaves
- 2 eggs, well beaten
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Directions

1. Cut the eggplant in half lengthwise, and scoop out the center, leaving enough meat inside the skin, about an inch, so that it holds its shape when baked. Dice the scooped out flesh, and reserve for use in the stuffing.
2. Preheat the oven to 350F, make sure to place racks in the lower and middle thirds of the oven.
3. In a strainer, rinse the rice well with cold water.
4. Place a large (6qt or larger) stock or sauté pan over medium high heat. When the pan is warmed, add the butter and allow to melt. When the butter is melted, and just beginning to brown, add the onions, celery, peppers, diced eggplant and salt.
5. Sauté the vegetables until they have softened, about 6-8 minutes, then add the garlic, chipotle, dried thyme and paprika. Blend well and sauté until the garlic is fragrant, about 2 minutes.
6. Add 3 ½ cups of the vegetable stock. Raise heat to high until the stock comes to a simmer.
7. Add the rice, reduce the heat to a low simmer and cover the pot.
8. The rice will take about 40 to 45 minutes to fully cook.
9. While the rice is cooking you can slice and toast the bread cubes and turn your attention to preparing the squash.

10. Toast the bread cubes on a baking sheet placed on the middle rack of the pre-heated oven. After 4 minutes or so give the cubes a stir to help promote even browning. Allow to bake for an additional 3-4 minutes or until golden brown.
11. Remove the bread from the oven and raise the heat to 425F
12. Once the rice is fully cooked remove the pan from the heat and blend in the bread cubes, adding additional stock as required. Allow the rice to cool enough so that the eggs won't cook when you stir them in.
13. Add the celery (or parsley) leaves and eggs and blend until well combined.
14. Taste for seasoning and add salt and pepper as desired.
15. Fill the scooped-out eggplant halves with this mixture, dividing it evenly among the halves. Place them on an oiled oven tray or baking dish, and bake for 40 minutes, on the lower rack in the preheated oven.
16. Let cool briefly, slice widthwise and serve.

I like to top the eggplants with a bit of cheese for color and flavor but I've omitted the cheese, keeping this strictly vegetarian. For this dish I like a Sheep's milk cheese such as Manchego or Pecorino.

## Baked Squash with Lime dressing

Ingredients for 6 servings.

- 3 1.5lb Kabocha squash, (You can substitute acorn, or buttercup)
- 1/2 teaspoon white pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced or 1 tbsp garlic puree
- 3 tablespoons fresh lime juice, or to taste
- 1 tbsp minced Jalapeno
- 1/4 cup tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
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Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F.
2. Cut the squash in half lengthwise, Scoop out the seeds and slice the squash into 1/2 inch thick slices, discarding the tops and bottoms if they are too uneven or lack enough flesh to roast.
3. Toss the squash with the pepper, salt, and olive oil then arrange on a large backing sheet.

4. Roast squash, on the middle rack in the preheated oven. After 20 minutes, halfway through the cooking process, remove the pan and flip the slice of squash over to brown both sides.
5. While the squash roasts, whisk together the garlic, lime juice, and jalapeno. I like to do this in a mini-food processor.
6. After another 20 minutes, once the squash are cooked, remove them from the oven and arrange the slices on a serving platter. Drizzle the Lime dressing evenly over the slices.
7. Garnish with the fresh Cilantro leaves and serve.