

ZAALOUK (MOROCCAN ROASTED EGGPLANT SALAD)

3 Comments

This text and recipe is posted with permission from [Spicebox Kitchen](#) by Linda Shiue, MD.

From the author: This warm salad combines roasted eggplant, tomatoes, and warm spices and can be enjoyed as a side or alone with lots of bread. It's one of the more common salads you'll be served to start a meal in Morocco.

The cinnamon is not typical, but I added it because this was the magic touch in my favorite version of this dish. It was prepared this way at Café la Tolérance, located in Essaouira, an ancient seaport on Morocco's west coast, where we enjoyed a live performance of gnaoua music, a mystical Sufi musical tradition from North and West Africa, and had a fascinating conversation with the owner about the culture and politics of Morocco and North Africa.

A note from Oaktown: You can also substitute 1 tablespoon of our [Baharat](#) or [Harissa](#) for the paprika, cinnamon, cumin and red pepper flakes with delicious results!

Serves 4 to 6

Ingredients:

2 pounds eggplant
1 tablespoon olive oil, plus more for brushing eggplant and finishing salad
Salt
3 garlic cloves, crushed
1 1/2 teaspoons Hungarian sweet paprika
1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes, or more to taste
2 cups peeled and chopped tomatoes
1/2 cup water
1 teaspoon salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1 bay leaf
1 lemon
1/4 to 1/2 cup fresh cilantro (a large handful), chopped

Directions:

Preheat oven to 450°F. Line a large baking sheet with parchment.

Peel eggplant, leaving a few strips of skin for color and structure, and slice lengthwise into 1/2-inch-thick slices. Brush both sides with olive oil, arrange in a single layer on prepared baking sheet, sprinkle with a pinch of salt, and roast in oven until slices are soft and browned, around 35 minutes.

Heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a large sauté pan with a lid over medium-high heat, add garlic, and cook for around 30 seconds. Add paprika, cumin, cinnamon, and red pepper flakes and bloom spices in hot oil for 10 seconds before adding chopped tomatoes, water, salt, black pepper to taste, and bay leaf. Let sauce simmer for 5 minutes.

While sauce is simmering, slice roasted eggplant into bite-size pieces. Add them to sauté pan, stirring to combine. Lower heat to medium-low, cover, and let simmer for another 5 minutes. Eggplant should now be fully cooked and tender but should still maintain its shape. Remove from heat, squeeze in lemon juice to taste, and sprinkle with chopped cilantro. Adjust seasoning to taste. Serve hot, or at room temperature, with a drizzle of olive oil and another squeeze of lemon juice.

