



# *Aubergine with parmesan*



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## *Dish History*

Here is the history of the aubergine with parmesan or “parmigiana di melanzane” in Italian. The exact origin of the dish’s name and its nature were lost over the years, but different theories will help us to situate it in the time.

The aubergine, “*melanzana*” in Italian, did its first appearance in the Southern regions of Italy, namely in Sicily, in Calabria and in Naples, in the 1400 years. It has then been introduced in the Northern regions, in Parma, among others, about the 1500 years. A lot of theories contradict the dish’s name “aubergine with parmesan” because it was originally a dish from the south and the parmesan didn’t exist in this region at this time. The most interesting theory is the following: the name wouldn’t apparently have any connection with the parmesan cheese referring to the city of Parma, but it would be of a linguistic deformation of “palmigiana”, that means “shutters”, namely window shutters to which aubergine slices are supposed to resemble. As the Sicilians have difficulty to pronounce the “L” letter, it sounds like “parmigiana”. In brief, this dish historically wouldn’t contain any cheese at all.

There are some little interesting differences between the traditional recipes of Naples, Sicily and Parma. In Naples, in Campania, the aubergines are coated with light breadcrumbs before being fried, which prevents them of sweating too much oil, and the cheese used was the mozzarella from two days before, that is drier. In Sicily, the aubergines are not coated with breadcrumbs, so the oil spills in the sauce and hard-boiled eggs slices are added. Furthermore, the Sicilians use “caciocavallo” (a typical cheese) in slices or parmesan. In Parma, the aubergine is often cut in slices, it is then fried in oil. The cheeses used are mozzarella and parmesan.

# The recipe

## Ingredients (for 4 people):

- 1,5 kg aubergines
- 1,4 liter canned crushed tomatoes
- Two tablespoons tomato purée
- 250 g mozzarella
- Two garlic cloves
- Parmesan or caciocavallo grating cheese
- Olive oil
- 10 cl red wine
- 10 cl water
- Salt and pepper
- Coarse salt

## Cooking Utensils

- A frying pan
- A mandolin
- A colander
- Tissue
- Pyrex plate
- Oven

## Preparation of recipe:

- Cut aubergines in thin slices in length and drain them with big salt (10) during 20 minutes. Rinse (11) and soak (12).



- In the meanwhile, brown garlic (2) in a saucepan with two tablespoons of olive oil (1) and add wine, crushed tomatoes (3) and the purée. Stir and add water. Add salt and pepper.
- Cover and let it simmer during 45 minutes over low heat.



- Cut mozzarella in thin slices. When aubergines are well drained, brown them in a frying pan with a little olive oil.
- As soon as the tomato sauce is ready, display the aubergines slices (19) alternately with some caciocavallo or grated parmesan (20), the mozzarella (21) and the tomato sauce in a gratin platter.



- Finish with a layer aubergines (25), the tomato sauce and the parmesan or freshly grated caciocavallo (26).
- Put in the oven at 210°C (thermostat 7) during 20 minutes and there you are (27)



ENJOY YOUR MEAL!