



TURKISH-STYLE BRAISED EGGPLANT

Time: 1 hour, plus at least 1 hour 15 minutes for draining and cooling

1 large eggplant (about 1 pound)
2 teaspoons salt
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
2 medium onions, roughly chopped
3 tablespoons pine nuts
1 large tomato, peeled, cored and roughly chopped
1/4 cup raisins
1 teaspoon sugar
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon cumin
Black pepper
1/2 cup roughly chopped dillweed
2 tablespoons roughly chopped parsley
Thick yogurt, for serving
Lemon wedges, for serving.

1. Trim ends off the eggplant. With a vegetable peeler, cut off alternating strips of skin. Cut eggplant into 1-inch cubes, place in a colander over a large bowl and toss with salt. Let sit for 30 minutes to 3 hours, rinse well and squeeze to remove as much liquid as possible; do not break cubes up.
2. In a large skillet or saucepan, heat 1/4 cup olive oil over medium-high heat until hot but not smoking. Add the eggplant cubes and move them around occasionally, until they are rather tender and somewhat browned, about 7 minutes. Remove from the pan with tongs, leaving as much oil as possible in the pan. Set aside.
3. Add remaining oil to the pan with the onions and pine nuts and stir occasionally, until the onions are transparent and some pine nuts are lightly browned, 7 or 8 minutes.
4. Return eggplant to the pan with the tomato, raisins, sugar, cinnamon, cumin and pepper. Mix well, then turn heat to low. Cover the pan and cook until the eggplant is very tender but still in distinct pieces, about 30 minutes. Uncover and continue cooking, stirring once or twice, until the liquid is somewhat thickened, 5 to 10 minutes.
5. Remove the pan from heat and let sit uncovered until it is at room temperature, about 45 minutes. Stir in the dill and parsley, adjust the seasonings to taste and serve, accompanied by yogurt and lemon wedges for squeezing.

Yield: 4 to 6 side-dish servings.