EGGPLANT CASSEROLE A LA EMERIL

4 tablespoons olive oil, divided
1 pound eggplant, peeled and 1/2" diced
1 tablespoon butter, mixed with 1 tablespoon olive oil
1 onion, 1/2" diced;
1 red bell pepper, 1/2" dice
4 ribs celery, 1/2" dice
1/4 pound mushrooms, sliced, optional (I used a small can)
1/2 cup basil leaves, fresh, chopped
1 cup grated parmesan
1/4 cup Italian-seasoned bread crumbs
1/2 cup heavy cream (I used half & half)
2 tablespoons cilantro or parsley, fresh
Salt & Pepper to taste

Add olive oil to large skillet over medium-high heat. Add cubed eggplant & cook half-way through. Set aside. Melt butter in olive oil & add red pepper, celery, onion & mushrooms. Saute 3 - 5 minutes. Add eggplant, herbs, salt & pepper. Saute 3 minutes; remove from heat. Toss in Parmesan, cream & bread crumbs. Transfer to iron skillet. Bake in oven 20 - 25 minutes, uncovered at 375 degrees. Serve with grilled lamb chops, if desired, or use as a main dish. Serves 4-6.

Adapted from a recipe from Stephen Spanyer