

## Eggplant Parmesan

*Vegetarian / Ground Chicken / Chicken Breast / or Cottage Cheese versions*

Serves 2

### Ingredients

- Canola or olive oil spray
- 1 large egg + 1 T (15 ml) water
- 50 g panko breadcrumbs
- 30 g grated Parmesan cheese, divided
- ½ tsp Italian seasoning (or oregano + basil mix)
- 4-5 Japanese eggplants (≈450 g), sliced crosswise 6 mm thick (*\*See note on Japanese eggplant below*)
- ¼ tsp salt + ¼ tsp ground pepper + ⅛ tsp MSG
- 400 g tomato chopped tomatoes
- 1 T (5 g) torn fresh basil leaves (or 1 tsp dried basil)
- 1 small garlic clove (3 g), grated
- Pinch crushed red pepper (optional)
- 50 g shredded mozzarella cheese, divided (*\*See note below about type of cheese*)



### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to **200 °C**. Spray a small baking sheet and a small (about 18 x 18 cm) baking dish.
2. Whisk **egg** and **water** in a bowl. In another dish, mix **panko**, **15 g Parmesan**, and **Italian seasoning**. Dip each slice of **eggplant** in the **egg**, then coat in **panko**, pressing gently. Arrange on baking sheet. Spray both sides lightly with oil.
3. **Bake 25 min**, flipping once halfway, until tender and golden. Sprinkle lightly with the salt-MSG blend and pepper.
4. In a bowl, combine **tomato sauce**, **basil**, **garlic**, and crushed **red pepper**.
5. Spread **60 ml sauce** on the bottom of the baking dish. Layer half the **eggplant**, spoon over **120 ml sauce**, sprinkle with **7 g Parmesan** and **25 g other cheese**.
6. Add remaining **eggplant**, **sauce**, and **cheeses**.
7. **Bake uncovered 20–25 min**, until the top is bubbling and golden. Let **cool 5 min** before serving. Garnish with extra **basil**.

### Nutrition

Base (Vegetarian): Kcal: 385 / Protein: 20g / Fat: 22g / Sat Fat: 7g / Carbs: 30g / Sugars: 10g / Fiber: 5g / Sodium: 580mg / Omega-3: 0.08g

Total Dish (2 servings): Kcal: 770 / Protein: 40g / Fat: 44g / Sat Fat: 14g / Carbs: 60g / Sugars: 20g / Fiber: 10g / Sodium: 1160mg / Omega-3: 0.16g

**Option 1** – Add **Ground Chicken** (100 g): Kcal: 465 / Protein: 29g / Fat: 26.5g / Sat Fat: 7.5g / Carbs: 30g / Fiber: 5g / Sodium: 620mg

**Option 2** – Add **Chicken Breast** (150 g cooked): Kcal: 495 / Protein: 43.5g / Fat: 23.5g / Sat Fat: 7g / Carbs: 30g / Fiber: 5g / Sodium: 620mg

**Option 3** – Add **Cottage Cheese** (80 g): Kcal: 420 / Protein: 24.5g / Fat: 23g / Sat Fat: 7g / Carbs: 32g / Fiber: 5g / Sodium: 640mg

### Notes

- Lightly salt eggplant slices and rest 15 min before breading to reduce sogginess.
- Finely grate Japanese mozzarella (雪印 or 明治) to ensure even melt.
- Alternate proteins such as tofu, chicken, or cottage cheese for variety.
- Can be assembled and refrigerated up to 8 hours before baking.
- \* Because Japanese eggplants hold more water, after slicing, sprinkle with a little salt and rest them for about **15 minutes**. Then pat dry before breading — this keeps the dish from becoming soggy and helps them brown better in the oven.

---

## About cheese for this kind of recipe

### 1. Firming up mozzarella for shredding

- **Refrigerate overnight**, then **freeze for 15–20 minutes** before shredding. This firms the texture just enough for a box grater or food processor.
- Use the **large-hole side of the grater**, or pulse briefly in a **mini food processor** — a few short bursts usually give an even shred.
- If you're using the “**mozzarella for pizza**” sold at Japanese supermarkets (シュレッツドチーズ or ピザ用チーズ), check the label: it's often pre-shredded but mixed with other cheeses like gouda or cheddar — which can actually melt better for this kind of dish.

---

### 2. Japanese-market cheese alternatives

These options melt well and complement the tomato and eggplant flavors:

Cheese	Japanese Availability	Flavor/Melt	Notes
<b>Pizza Mix</b> (ピザ用チーズ)	Very common	Good melt, mild	Usually a blend with gouda; melts evenly without oiling out
<b>Gouda</b> (ゴーダ)	Common	Creamy, slightly nutty	Grates easily, adds depth; mix 50/50 with mozzarella
<b>Mild cheddar</b>	Some import shops	Richer, more savory	Use in small amount (25–30%) for flavor contrast
<b>Fontina</b> (フォンティーナ)	Available in Kaldi, Seijo Ishii	Silky melt, delicate flavor	Excellent if you can find it
<b>Scamorza or provolone</b>	Sometimes in Kaldi or Costco	Clean melt, firmer texture	Shreds easier than mozzarella, very Italian

Cheese	Japanese Availability	Flavor/Melt	Notes
<b>Sliced processed cheese</b> (とろけるスライス)	Everywhere	Smooth melt, mild	Tear into pieces; not ideal for layering but good for topping finish

---

### 💡 3. Taste & texture combinations

For the best “Italian-style” balance with Japanese availability, try:

- $\frac{1}{2}$  **mozzarella** +  $\frac{1}{2}$  **gouda** → soft melt with nutty richness
  - $\frac{2}{3}$  **mozzarella** +  $\frac{1}{3}$  **cheddar** → mild stretch but more flavor punch
  - **All gouda + sprinkle of Parmesan** → less stretch but excellent browning and aroma
- 

### ✅ Best practice for this Eggplant Parmesan

Since this is baked, not broiled:

- Use **50% mozzarella + 50% gouda or pizza mix**.
- Grate just before using (pre-shredded bags often clump if stored too long).
- If you want better browning, add **a light drizzle of olive oil** before baking.