

BAINGAN AND ALOOBHAJI

(Whole Eggplants and Potatoes With Pine Nuts)

This very special eggplant recipe is appetizing and beautiful to look at and is enjoyed by vegetarians and nonvegetarians alike. My friend Kailash used to make it a day ahead, as it takes a little extra time to fry the vegetables and complete the cooking process. It refrigerates very well. Choose Indian eggplants, which are the size of Ping-Pong balls (check Indian markets for these), and potatoes of the same size.

- 5-6 Indian eggplants
- 5-6 small potatoes
- 2 cups oil for frying
- 1 Tbsp. oil
- 1 medium onion, sliced
- 4 medium tomatoes, chopped
- 2 tsp. sliced ginger
- 2 tsp. crushed garlic
- 1 tsp. ground coriander
- 1 1/2 tsp. garam masala
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- salt to taste
- 1 oz. pine nuts
- fresh coriander leaves

Peel the potatoes and wash the eggplants; pat dry. Retain the eggplant stems but remove the coarse leaves, then make lengthwise cuts into the eggplants. Keep well away from the stem so the eggplants remain intact.

Heat oil in wok or shallow pan and lightly sauté the eggplants. Do not overcook. Remove and drain. Fry whole potatoes in the same oil until golden brown; set aside to cool. When cooled, perforate the potatoes four or five times with a fork, keeping them intact.

Heat 1 Tbsp. oil in a wide frying pan and fry onion till lightly browned. Add tomatoes, ginger, garlic, coriander, garam masala, chili powder, and salt; mix well. Cook until the sauce turns a rich red and leaves the side of the pan. Very gently arrange first the fried potatoes and then the eggplants over the sauce. Turn lightly, sprinkle with a little garam masala. Cover and cook on low heat for about 10

minutes. Garnish with pine nuts and chopped coriander leaves.