

FAIRY TALE EGGPLANT

mascarpone, black mint

The only way to screw up this dish is to use garden-variety eggplants—the kind you’d use for eggplant Parmesan. Fairy Tales are much smaller—just two or three inches long—and have incredibly delicate flavor and very tender flesh. The secret to this dish at the restaurant is roasting the eggplant in the wood-fired oven just until it’s just starting to brown at the edges. The smokiness from the fire works magic. But a quick roast in your own hot oven or a few minutes in a scorching pan will get you more than close enough.

If you’re using an oven to roast the eggplant, preheat it to the highest temperature possible, ideally 500°F. Slice the eggplants in half lengthwise, dress them with a little olive oil, and season them generously with salt and pepper. Place them skin side down on a baking sheet and roast them for about 15 minutes, until they begin to color. Let them cool to room temperature.

If you’re cooking the eggplant on the stovetop, coat a cast-iron pan with olive oil and put it over almost high heat. Slice the eggplants in half lengthwise and season them with salt and pepper. Cook on one side for 5 to 7 minutes, then flip and cook the same amount of time on the other side. (These are little guys; they don’t take long. You want them firm, with a bite, not mushy.) Let the eggplant cool to room temperature.

Spoon the mascarpone onto two plates. Arrange the eggplant on the plates, drizzle with a little olive oil, and season with a little more salt and pepper. Scatter the mint leaves over the eggplant and serve.

SERVES 2

5 or 6 Fairy Tale eggplants
(or 3 of the smallest
Japanese eggplants
you can find)

Some good olive oil

Kosher salt

Freshly ground black
pepper

30 grams (generous
2½ tablespoons)
mascarpone, at room
temperature

A small handful of
black mint leaves*

* Black mint is a Peruvian variety with an incredibly pure, really strong mint flavor. If you can’t find it, use any fresh mint.