Eggplant
*Solanum melongena*, Solanaceae

The fruit of a plant originally from India, eggplant is a berry that is eaten as a vegetable. There are several varieties of eggplants. The **purple-skinned eggplant**, which has an elongated form like a large pear, is the most well-known variety. The **Asian** or “Chinese” **eggplant** refers to several varieties that can be as small as an egg, long and thin, or resemble a cluster of grapes. The thin, shiny, smooth skin can be dark or light purple, cream, white, green or orange. The yellowish-white flesh is spongy and contains small brownish edible seeds.

**BUYING**
:: Choose: a firm, heavy eggplant, with smooth, evenly colored skin. To test for ripeness, press sides gently; if the imprint remains visible, the eggplant is ready to eat.
:: Avoid: an eggplant with wrinkled, dull skin or with brown spots.

**NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>raw</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>water</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>protein</td>
<td>1.2 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carbohydrates</td>
<td>6.3 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fiber</td>
<td>1.5 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>calories</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GOOD SOURCE:** potassium.
**CONTAINS:** folic acid, copper, vitamin B₆ and magnesium.
**PROPERTIES:** diuretic, laxative and calming.

**SERVING IDEAS**

Eggplant is delicious hot or cold. It can be stuffed, broiled, gratinéed, stewed, skewered or puréed. It is cooked with tomatoes, garlic and olive oil, as in ratatouille, *baba ghanoush* (eggplant dip) or moussaka. Some Asian varieties can be eaten raw in a salad.

---

**PREPARING**

Prepare eggplant quickly or sprinkle it with lemon juice if it is left standing, as its flesh discolors quickly when cut. It is a good idea to cut large eggplants, sprinkle them liberally with salt and let sit for 1 to 2 hrs to remove some of their water content and bitterness. Eggplant can also be soaked in water for about 15 min, peeled, or simply cooked as is when using a less bitter variety.

**STORING**

Eggplant should be handled with care, as it is easily damaged. It is very sensitive to changes in temperature.
:: In the fridge: 1 week. Remove any wrapping as quickly as possible and place the eggplant in a loosely closed or perforated plastic bag.
:: In the freezer: 6-8 months, blanch or steam prior to freezing.

**COOKING**

Blanch the eggplant for a few minutes before cooking. Avoid adding salt, especially at the beginning of cooking time.
:: Fried: coat slices of eggplant in flour, beaten egg and bread crumbs for deep or pan-frying. Coating eggplants reduces fat absorption.
:: Baked: prick the eggplant so that it doesn’t burst. Cook whole and unpeeled at 350°F (175°C) for 15-25 min depending on size. It can also be halved (make incisions in the flesh) so that it cooks evenly. Stuffed, it will take 35-60 min at 350°F (175°C) to cook. Cut into slices or chunks, eggplant cooks in 15-20 min. It can be brushed with a little olive oil and seasoned.
:: Steamed or microwaved.
:: Grilled or broiled: cook 4 to 6 inches from the heat source until browned on both sides. Brush with oil if it looks dry.

---

**FRUIT VEGETABLES**

**Western eggplant**

**Thai eggplant**

**White eggplant**

**Asian long eggplant**