

Recipe from ThisVeganGirl.com

Lemon Basil Eggplant Parmesan Sandwiches

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 20-25 minutes

Yield: 4 patties for 4 sandwiches

INGREDIENTS:

For the eggplant patty:

- one large eggplant, sliced
- 1/2 cup breadcrumbs, gluten-free and vegan (I use the brand Gillian's Breadcrumbs)
- 4 pieces of rice paper
- salt and pepper, to taste

For the lemon pesto:

- 1 juice of a small lemon, squeezed (3 tablespoons of lemon juice)
- 1/2 cup of fresh basil, minced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 pinches of salt

Other ingredients:

- bread of your choice (sandwich bread, sub rolls, buns)
- Chao cheese slices (or homemade Moxarella cheese recipe, seen at the bottom of this recipe*)
- your favorite marinara sauce
- any other sandwich add-ons (onion, tomato, spinach, etc.)

Step 1: Slice the eggplant and decide what you are doing with it.

Cut your eggplant into thick slices. When cooked, eggplant loses its volume a bit, so cutting it a bit thicker will work out nicely in the final product. I suggest cutting up to 6 inch/15 centimeter slices. After that, you have a big choice to make. Are you going to fry your eggplant or bake it?

DECIDE NOW.

- If you are going to **fry** your eggplant, see STEP 2.
- If you are going to **bake** your eggplant, go down to STEP 3.

Step 2: Precook the eggplant in the oven.

Ah, so you've chosen to fry your eggplant. A fine choice for the taste buds. You'll want to precook your eggplant in the oven to make it softer before frying it. Preheat the oven to 350° F / 176° C. Coat your baking sheet with 1 tablespoon of grape seed oil and bake for 15 minutes. Allow the eggplant slices to cool before Step 3.

Step 3: Wrap and bread your eggplant.

Without egg, it can be difficult to keep breadcrumbs on whatever you're trying to cook. My favorite solution is to first wrap it in sticky rice paper, which will hold breadcrumbs beautifully. Plus, rice paper has a fantastic texture that can hold any flavor.

Speaking of flavor, on the list of ingredients, I put "salt and pepper, to taste". The breadcrumbs are where you really get that flavor in. Your breadcrumbs might already have an amazing flavor; in this case, you don't need to add anything to it. In my case, the breadcrumbs I buy don't have any flavor, so I need to add salt and pepper on my own. Feel free to get creative here. You can amp up your

breadcrumbs by also adding garlic powder and/or Italian herbs.

Set up an assembly line for your work station: a large, flat dish filled with warm water, a plate to wrap the eggplant, a dish with the breadcrumbs, and a dish to place your finished patties on. To assemble, first submerge one piece of rice paper into the warm water for around 10 seconds. Next, transfer the softened rice paper onto the wrapping plate. Strategically fold the wrapping paper so all sides of the eggplant are equally covered. Lastly, take the patty onto the breadcrumb plate and cover the rice paper with breadcrumbs. Continue this process until all patties are complete.

Step 4: Cook your patties.

If you are baking your eggplant: Cook your patties at 450° F / 232° C for 20 minutes, flipping the patties about halfway through.

If you are pan-frying your eggplant: In a deep skillet, coat the bottom with 4 tablespoons of grape seed oil at medium heat. Once the oil is heated, use a spatula to gently place the patties in the skillet. You may have to turn the heat down to medium low, depending on your stove. Flip patties over when they have cooked to golden brown (5-10 minutes). Cook the other side of the patty for 5 minutes. When both sides are golden brown, place on a plate lined with paper towels to soak up excess oil.

If you created the homemade mozzarella cheese, the patties taste delicious if the mozzarella cheese is browned. After the patties are done cooking, add the mozzarella cheese into the oven on broil. Cook for 3-5 minutes, keeping your eye on it to prevent burning.

Step 5: Prepare other toppings, including the lemon pesto.

If you haven't done so by now, begin to heat up your marinara sauce in a saucepan on the stove. Cover and stir occasionally.

If your bread is gluten-free and vegan, you probably need to thaw and toast. The bread I use is by Food for Life, which is expensive, but so delicious!

If you are adding any vegetables to your sandwich (such as onion, tomato, or spinach), prepare.

To make the lemon pesto, put all lemon pesto ingredients in a food processor or blender. Spread it on your bread when ready.

Step 6: Assemble and enjoy!

Put it all together, and you have delicious sandwiches!

* Homemade mozzarella cheese recipe seen at this web address:
<http://www.thisvegangirl.com/2015/02/26/tomato-mozzarella-melts/>