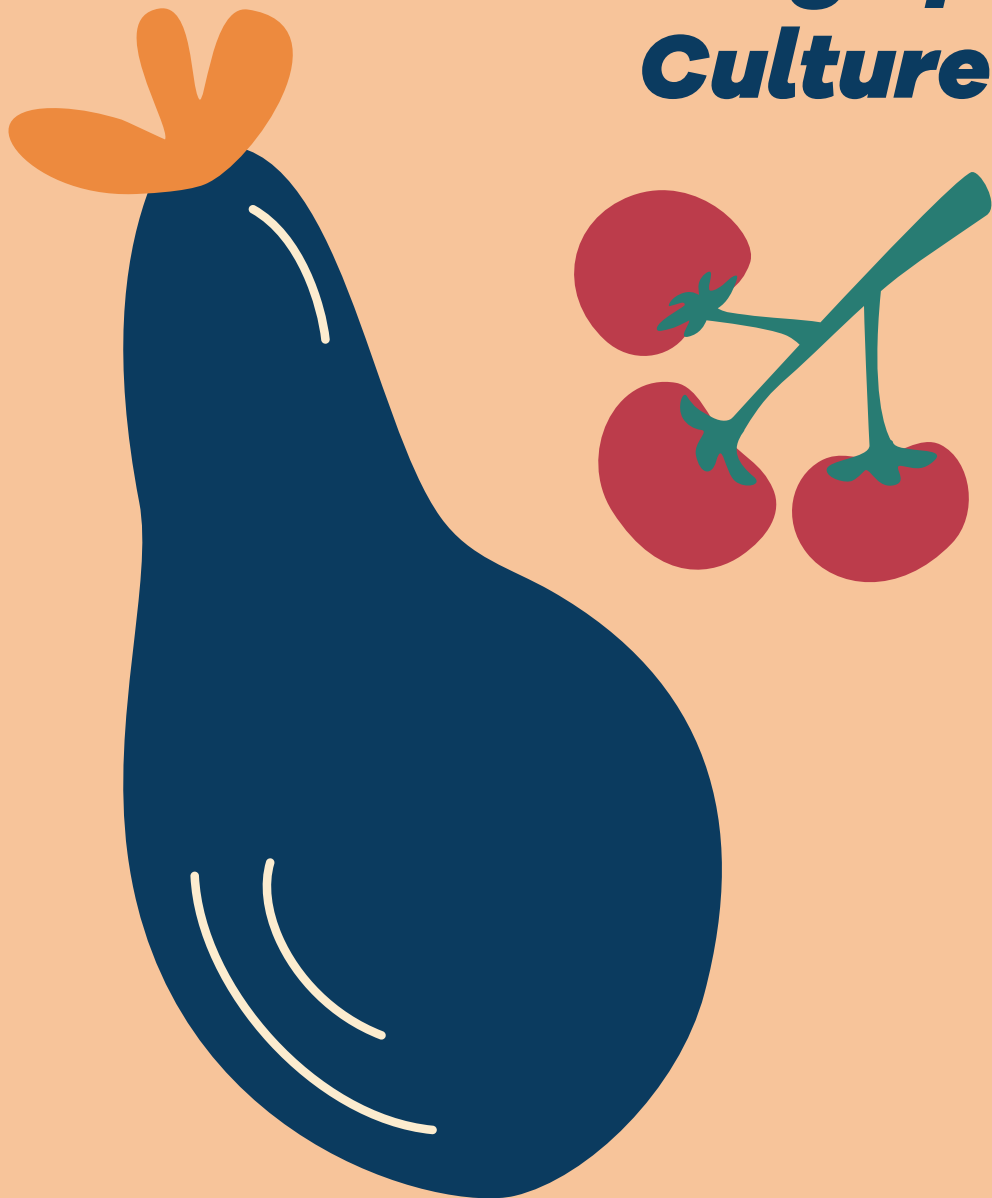


Cooking up Culture



Pan Fried Eggplant (Badenjan Bourani)
by Homaira Mershed



“This is a dish commonly made in most regions in Afghanistan.

“I was taught this dish by my father when I was 11 years old. The vibrant smell takes us back home and it reminds me of being under a tree having a picnic by Qargha Lake when I was about 8 years old.

“Afghans are mostly vegetarian. Most people dry the eggplant when in season and this dish is mostly made in winter as it is considered as a warm vegetable.”

Ingredients

- 1kg eggplant**
- 2 cups water**
- 1/2 cup oil**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- 1 cup yellow dry peas (lentils)**
- 1 large onion**
- 3 large tomatoes (2 finely chopped, 1 finely sliced)**
- 3 cloves garlic**
- 1 green capsicum**
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric**
- 1 teaspoon dried coriander**
- 1/2 cup yoghurt (optional)**
- 1 tablespoon dry mint**
- 1/2 cup fresh coriander**
- 2 Afghan breads**

Method

Serves 4

Peel the eggplant, cut round shapes of 1.5cm. Spread it on a towel and lightly salt it. Turn over in half hour and lightly salt the other side. Let it sit for an hour, dry the moisture with a towel and let it sit for another 2 hours so that it is semi dried.

Boil yellow lentils in a separate pot for 15 minutes, drain the water and wash thoroughly.

Lightly pan fry the eggplant to a golden colour.

To make the sauce, pan fry the finely chopped onion to a golden colour. In a separate pan, add finely chopped tomatoes, garlic and capsicum, add turmeric and pan fry for 5 minutes. Add yellow lentils and simmer with 2 cups water. Add dry coriander and let it sit for 5 minutes.

Lay 1 layer of eggplant pieces in a frying pan, and a round of thinly sliced tomato over it. Pour some of the onion and tomato sauce over the top. Lay another layer of eggplant and pour the rest of the sauce.

Cover with lid and cook the dish over low heat for 45 minutes. Then take the lid off and cook until the juice is 80% evaporated.

Finely spread half of the mixed yoghurt and dry mint on a platter. Lay the cooked eggplant and pour the remaining yoghurt and mint mix over the eggplant. Garnish with coriander and eat with toasted Afghan bread.