

Session 2

Chargrilled eggplant with mozzarella & pesto

Season: Summer/Autumn

Type: Big Dishes

Difficulty: Easy

Serves: 24 tastes in the classroom
(one slice of eggplant per student)
or 4 serves at home

Fresh from the garden: basil, eggplant, oregano

Recipe Source: Collingwood College, Victoria

This recipe assumes you are using homemade basil pesto, which is made with fresh basil, olive oil, garlic and pine nuts. You could also chop an extra half to one cup of fresh basil leaves and scatter them over the eggplant at that step, instead of the pesto.

Equipment:

chopping board
1 large knife
2 clean tea towels
grater
bowls – 1 medium, 3 small
pastry brush
plates
2 chargrill pans
tongs
paper towels
3 baking trays
spoon
oven mitts

Ingredients:

500 g mozzarella
½ cup fresh basil leaves
handful fresh oregano sprigs
3–4 eggplants
2–3 tablespoons olive oil, plus
more to oil the chargrill pans
½ cup basil pesto
2–3 sprigs oregano
fresh basil leaves, to garnish
extra virgin olive oil, to serve
salt and pepper, to taste



What to do:

- Preheat the oven to 200°C.
- Set out the chopping board and knife. Dampen a tea towel and place it under the chopping board to prevent it from slipping.
- Grate the mozzarella, place it in the medium-sized bowl and set aside.
- Wash the oregano and basil, then dry them with a clean tea towel.
- Strip the oregano and basil leaves from the stems and discard the stems.
- Tear up the basil into small pieces, put all the leaves into a small bowl and set aside.
- Use the large knife to cut the eggplant into slices, creating consistent 1 cm thick rounds.
- Measure the olive oil into a small bowl.
- Using the pastry brush, brush each side of the eggplant slices with olive oil.
- Put the slices on a plate and set aside.
- Put the two chargrill pans on high heat and pour a small amount of oil into each pan.

When the oil is hot, carefully use tongs to place the eggplant slices on the chargrill pans. Cook each eggplant slice until golden brown marks appear. Then turn the slices over and cook until golden brown marks appear on the other side too.

Remove the cooked eggplant slices and place them on paper towels on a plate to drain.

Once all the eggplant slices are cooked and have drained, place them on the baking trays and put the mozzarella on top.

Spoon the pesto sauce on top of the mozzarella.

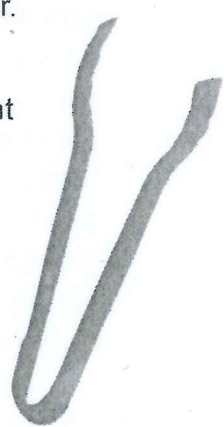
Place the baking trays with the eggplant into the oven. Cook for 10 minutes or until the cheese has melted.

Put on oven mitts and remove the trays of eggplant from the oven.

Use a spatula to transfer the eggplant to the serving platters. Be careful – the cheese is very hot.

Once the eggplant slices are on serving platters, scatter the basil and oregano over them, then drizzle with extra virgin olive oil. Season with salt and pepper.

Notes: Volunteers should help students slice the eggplants to a uniform thickness. Marrow, zucchini and pumpkin slices can be used instead of eggplant in this recipe. If there is a large harvest of eggplant, this recipe can be made up with double portions of eggplant by adding a second eggplant round on top (sandwich style!).



Hummus

Season: All
Type: Dips
Difficulty: Easy

Serves: 30 tastes in the classroom
or 6 at home

Fresh from the garden: garlic, lemon, parsley

Recipe Source: Adapted from Stephanie Alexander's *Kitchen Garden Companion* (Penguin Lantern 2009)

The word for chickpea in Arabic is hummus, and the creamy paste made from chickpeas is so well-loved that it has taken this name. What's your favourite way of eating hummus – with bread, vegetable sticks, dolloped over a fresh salad?

The chickpeas should have been soaked in water overnight so they cook well. They also take around 2 hours to cook, so they will have been prepared ahead for you to use in this recipe, and you may help to prepare some for the next class.

Equipment:

metric measuring scales,
spoons and cups
large pot
blender
spatula
serving plates

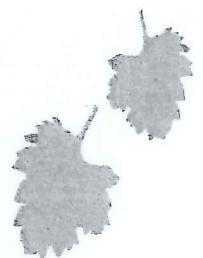
Ingredients:

200 g chickpeas, soaked overnight
salt
black pepper
2 teaspoons ground cumin
2 garlic cloves
1 lemon
pinch cayenne pepper (optional)
handful parsley sprigs
¼ cup olive oil



What to do:

- Cook the chickpeas until very soft and add salt towards the end of the cooking time. Allow to cool a little in the water.
- Transfer the chickpeas to a blender and season with cumin and pepper
- Process, stopping every now and then to gradually add the rest of the ingredients (except the oil and parsley), until you get the taste you like – remember, though, that it should taste a little 'sharp'.
- Add a little cooking water and blend again to make a soft purée.
- Spoon onto your serving plates, and garnish each one with some torn parsley parsley and a little drizzle of oil.





Greek Salad

Season: Summer

Type: Salads

Difficulty: Easy

Serves: 30 tastes in the classroom
or 6 at home

Fresh from the garden: cucumbers, green peppers, spring onions, tomatoes

Recipe Source: Recipe adapted from Stephanie Alexander's *Kitchen Garden Cooking with Kids* (Penguin, 2006)

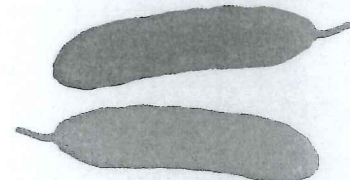
Ingredients vary a little depending on availability, but a Greek salad should always be a celebration of ripe tomatoes and will always be a colourful dish. Usually it is topped with feta, as this recipe shows.

Equipment:

tea towel
chopping board
knives – 1 small, 1 large
peeler
teaspoon
bowls – 1 small, 1 large
metric measuring spoons and scales
fork
wooden spoon

Ingredients:

2 cucumbers
12 tomatoes or 6 large
4 spring onions or 1 small red onion
2 green peppers
24 kalamata olives
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
3 teaspoons red wine vinegar
salt
freshly ground black pepper
100 g feta



What to do:

- Peel the cucumber and halve lengthways. Using the teaspoon, scoop out most of the seeds from the centre of the cucumber. Cut the cucumber into 2 cm dice and transfer to the large bowl.
- Cut the tomatoes into chunks or wedges and add to the bowl. If using spring onions, trim the outside layer and cut off the tops and ends, then cut the spring onions into 1 cm pieces. If using red onion, halve and peel, then place the flat side down on the board and cut crossways as finely as you can. Add the onion to the cucumber bowl. Cut the green pepper into 1 cm dice and add to the bowl. Place all the scraps in the compost bucket.
- Press the flat side of the large knife onto each olive to squash it – the pip can now be removed easily. Add the olives to the salad.
- In the small bowl, combine the oil and vinegar to make the dressing. Whisk lightly with a fork, then pour over the salad and mix all the ingredients well with the spoon. Taste for salt and pepper (remember the cheese is quite salty). Weigh the feta, crumble it over the salad, then serve.





Wheat Tortillas

Season: All
Type: Basics & Breads
Difficulty: Easy

Serves: 30 tastes in the classroom
or 6 at home

Recipe Source: Adapted from an original by Esther Nelson

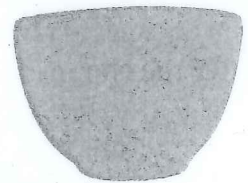
Make these Mexican flat breads as thin as possible so they cook really quickly and get really crisp – you'll be surprised at how they bubble up in the pan.

Equipment:

metric scales, cups and spoons
large bowl
heavy-based frying pan

Ingredients:

450 g plain flour
1 tablespoon butter
1 teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
1 cup warm water



What to do:

- Mix together the flour, baking powder and salt in large bowl. Rub in butter to resemble texture of polenta. Add water slowly, mixing with your hands to make a soft dough. You may not need all the water, but add a little if the dough seems too dry.
- Knead a few minutes on floured surface until smooth and elastic. Lubricate top with oil, put back in bowl and let rest, covered for 10 minutes.
- Divide into small balls the size of golf balls and proceed to roll out into a 10 cm circle, about 1 mm thick. (Ensure you make enough for all diners to have at least half a tortilla.)
- Cook in dry heavy frying pan until top is slightly bubbly then turning on opposite side for a minute or two. Keep stacked and warm inside a clean tea towel.