

## Cedar-Planked Eggplant Parmigiana

Recipe adapted from *How To Grill Vegetables: The New Bible for Barbecuing Vegetables over Live Fire*, Workman Publishing

A celebration of all the ways to grill green, *How To Grill Vegetables* delivers recipes for everything from starters to sides to desserts, alongside a complete step-by-step handbook to mastering the techniques of grilling vegetables.

“Raichlen’s Rule states that if something tastes great baked, fried or sautéed, it probably tastes better grilled. Which brings us to a dish I never imagined I’d cook on the grill: eggplant parmigiana. Grilling benefits eggplant parmigiana in several ways. You eliminate a lot of the oil and oil-soaked breading, and the charred cedar plank adds another layer of flavor and cool factor. Finally, my grilled version is a lot quicker, easier and less messy to make than traditional eggplant parm, and it tastes cleaner, too. Take the time to source slender eggplants (preferably organic) at your farmers’ market or at an Italian or Middle Eastern market, and you’ll actually wind up enjoying eggplant parmigiana for its namesake vegetable, not just for the breadcrumbs and cheese. Speaking of cheese, I’ve substituted cream-rich burrata for the traditional mozzarella. Burrata starts as mozzarella, but the cheesemakers stuff it with soft creamy curds and cream. Delectable just got better,” *Steven Raichlen*

## Cedar-Planked Eggplant Parmigiana

Serves 4

### Equipment

2 Cedar Grilling Planks

### Ingredients

1 medium or 2 small eggplants (about 12 ounces in all – you’ll need 12 slices)

Extra virgin olive oil for brushing and drizzling

Coarse salt (sea or kosher) and freshly ground black pepper

Dried oregano flakes, preferably Italian

Vegetable oil for oiling the cooking grid

12 ounces fresh burrata, sliced (cream reserved), or mozzarella

2 cups of your favorite chunky tomato sauce

½ cup freshly and finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

4 basil leaves, thinly slivered (optional)

½ cup dried plain breadcrumbs, preferably homemade, or panko (optional)

### Method

Set the EGG for direct grilling without a convEGGtor at 400°F/204°C. Char the cedar planks on one side, about 2 minutes – long enough for them to darken and smoke, but not so long they catch fire. Set aside and let cool on a heatproof surface.

Meanwhile, cut the eggplant crosswise into ¼-inch-thick slices. Lightly brush each on both sides with olive oil and season on both sides with salt, pepper, and oregano.



Brush or scrape the cooking grid clean and oil it well. Arrange the eggplant slices on the grid. Grill until well browned on both sides and soft in the center, 2 to 3 minutes per side, turning with tongs. Alternatively, you can grill the eggplant on a preheated plancha. Transfer the eggplant slices to a rimmed sheet pan and let cool.

Assemble the parmigianas: Place a slice of eggplant on each plank (2 slices if using long planks). Top each slice with a slice of burrata (spoon on some of the cream as well), followed by a generous dollop of tomato sauce. Sprinkle with Parmigiano-Reggiano and a tuft of slivered basil (if using). Build the second layer of eggplant, burrata, tomato sauce, Parmigiano-Reggiano, and basil. Crown with a slice of eggplant. If you like a crisp top, sprinkle the top eggplant slice with breadcrumbs and drizzle with extra virgin olive oil. The eggplant parmigianas can be assembled and refrigerated several hours ahead of time and grilled at the last minute.

Add the convEGGtor to set the EGG for indirect cooking. Return the parmigianas on their planks to the grid. Cook until the tomato sauce is bubbling, the cheese is melted, and the tops are browned, 10 to 15 minutes. Serve the parmigianas on their planks.

