

## Imam Bayildi



The literal translation of this dish is "to make the wise man faint." Eggplant is plentiful in the Eastern Mediterranean, and this variation of the traditional Turkish dish is so good, it can make even an imam (a learned wise man or cleric) swoon!

*Yield: 6 servings*

Ingredients	Amounts
Japanese eggplants, small, slender	6 ea.
Olive oil	1 cup
Medium onions, diced small	2 ea.
Garlic cloves, minced	5 ea.
Tomatoes, peeled, seeded and diced	½ lb.
Parsley, chopped	2 Tbsp.
Cilantro or mint, chopped	2 Tbsp
Dill, chopped	2 Tbsp.
Cinnamon, ground	¼ tsp.
Golden raisins, plumped in warm water	¼ cup
Pomegranate molasses	2 Tbsp.
Water or vegetable stock	½ cup

### Method

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Starting about ¼-inch from the stem end, make a lengthwise slit down the center of each eggplant, being careful not to cut all the way through. Stop ¼-inch before the end.

3. Season the inside of each eggplant with salt and pepper.
4. In a sauté pan over medium-low heat, fry the eggplants in the olive oil. They should be brown on the outside and starting to soften in the middle. Remove from the oil and drain on paper towels. Pour off and discard all but 2 tablespoons of the oil, return the pan to heat and cook the onions until translucent and soft. Add the garlic and cook briefly until fragrant—about 1 minute.
5. Remove the onion-garlic mixture to a bowl and cool briefly. Add the tomatoes, the fresh chopped herbs, cinnamon, raisins and pomegranate molasses.
6. Mix to incorporate all the ingredients, and season to taste.
7. Lay the eggplants in a casserole in one layer and open up the cut side of each one. Heap a sixth of the tomato-raisin mixture inside each eggplant. Carefully pour the water or stock around the eggplant, cover with foil and bake for 30-40 minutes.
8. Remove from oven, unwrap, cool to room temperature and serve.

