

## **Imam Bayildi (Vegetarian Eggplant)**

*1 ½ lb eggplant*  
*8 garlic cloves peeled*  
*½ onion chopped fine*  
*¼ cup of vegetable oil (or more if needed)*  
*14 ounces can chopped tomatoes*  
*1 green bell pepper sliced fine (optional)*  
*1 tablespoon of pepper paste*  
*Salt and pepper (to taste)*



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Wash the eggplant and peel in stripes, then cut in half lengthwise. Heat the oil in a pan and sauté the eggplant until golden (about 6 minutes) on both sides. Add more oil if necessary. Remove from oil and drain on a paper towel covered plate. In the same oil, sauté the onion until translucent. Add the garlic and sauté until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add the tomatoes and the pepper paste and cook for a couple of minutes. Add the bell peppers and eggplants. Cover and cook for about 30 minutes until eggplant is soft. Season with salt and pepper. Allow to cool and serve cold. This is the traditional method of making Imam Bayildi. If you prefer a healthier version, you can brush the eggplant with olive oil and broil under the broiler until golden. Prepare the sauce on the sauce in the same method described above using only 2 tablespoons of oil to sauté the onions. Then pour the sauce over the eggplant and bake in the oven for 30 minutes.