

## Roasted Eggplant Dip

Cooking time 8 minutes

Preparation time 8 minutes

Standing Time 20 minutes

Roasting Time 40 minutes

Makes 3 1/2 cups (875 ml)

### Ingredients

- 8 eggplants
- 1 head garlic
- 2 tsp (10 ml) olive oil
- 2 tomatoes
- 3 tbsp (45 ml) tomato paste
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml) saffron threads
- 1/4 tsp (1 ml) cayenne
- Pinches of salt

1. Place oven racks in top and bottom third of oven. Preheat to 375F (190C). Slice eggplants in half and place on 2 baking sheets. Brush with oil. Slice top off garlic and drizzle cloves with 1 tsp (5 mL) oil, then tightly wrap in foil. Set beside eggplant. Roast in centre of oven, rotating sheets halfway through until eggplants are very soft, 40 to 60 min., depending on their size.
2. Meanwhile, finely chop tomatoes and measure out remaining ingredients. When eggplants are soft, remove from oven. Heat remaining oil in a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Add tomatoes, tomato paste, saffron, cayenne and pinches of salt. Stir often, until tomatoes start to break down, 3 to 5 min. If mixture is very dry, add water, 1 tbsp (15 mL) at a time, just until moist. Reduce heat to medium-low.
3. Using a spoon, scoop flesh from eggplants into pan. Squeeze in roasted garlic. Stir often, mashing up large pieces, until texture is even, 5 min. Or whirl in a food processor. Taste and add salt and cayenne if needed. Serve right away or cover and refrigerate up to 2 days. Serve cold or reheat in microwave. Excellent with pita.

This dip's smoky, sophisticated tomato-saffron flavour is outstanding. Chef Alireza Fakhrashrafi and his wife, Danielle Schrage, owners of Toronto's Pomegranate restaurant, kindly shared it with us.