



Sweet Yu Xiang Chinese Eggplant Stir-Fry with Steamed Rice

By Dylan Sabuco

Prep Time 12 / **Cook Time** 20 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

stir: to mix together two or more ingredients with a spoon or spatula, usually in a circle pattern, or figure eight, or in whatever direction you like!

measure: to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

boil: to cook a food in liquid heated to the point of gas bubbles and steam forming (boiling point is 212 F at sea level).

chop: to cut something into small, rough pieces using a blade.

stir-fry: to cook meat, fish, or vegetables rapidly over high heat while stirring briskly—used in Asian cooking.

Equipment

- ☐ Saucepan + matching lid
- ☐ Dry measuring cups
- ☐ Liquid measuring cup
- ☐ Fork
- ☐ Large sauté pan or wok
- ☐ Cutting board + kid-safe knife
- ☐ Large mixing bowl
- ☐ Small mixing bowl
- ☐ Measuring spoons

- ☐ Wooden spoon
- ☐ Blender
- ☐ Whisk

Ingredients

Sweet Yu Xiang Chinese Eggplant Stir-Fry with Steamed Rice

- ☐ Steamed rice:
- ☐ 1 C instant white rice
- ☐ 1 C water
- ☐ 1 pinch salt
- ☐ Stir-fry:
- ☐ 1 eggplant (if unavailable: sub 1 zucchini, 1 blk firm tofu, or 10 small mushrooms)
- ☐ 1 carrot
- ☐ 2 green onions
- ☐ 1 red, yellow, or orange bell pepper
- ☐ 2 tsp ginger root, peeled and minced
- ☐ 2 T vegetable oil
- ☐ 1/2 tsp mild chili powder
- ☐ 1 pinch salt
- ☐ 1 pinch black pepper

Food Allergen Substitutions

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Instructions

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intro

Greet your family with a "Nǐ hǎo" (knee-how) ("Hello" in Chinese). Today's recipe is Sweet Yu Xiang (You-SHang) Chinese Eggplant Stir-Fry with Steamed Rice!

measure + boil + stir

Measure and combine **1 cup instant rice** and **1 cup water** in a small pot over medium heat and cover with a lid. The lid is important to create steam within the pot. Steam will give the rice a fluffy texture. Boil for roughly 5 minutes or until all the water is absorbed and small holes appear at the surface of the rice. Season with **1 pinch of salt**. Stir gently with a fork, cover, and reserve for later.

chop + measure

Chop **1 eggplant**, **1 carrot**, **2 green onions**, and **1 bell pepper**. Combine them all in a large mixing bowl and set aside. In a small mixing bowl, measure and combine **2 teaspoons ginger root**, **2 tablespoons vegetable oil**, **1/2 teaspoon chili powder**, **1 pinch of salt**, and **1 pinch of black pepper**.

toast + stir fry + serve

Add the mixture of oil and spices to a large sauté pan or wok. Turn the heat to medium. Stir until the spices begin to sizzle. Toasting the spices like this will make them all a bit more potent. After about 30 seconds, add all the vegetables and stir! Continue cooking, stirring constantly until all the vegetables are soft and glazed with all the spices, about 10 to 12 minutes of cooking time. Serve hot out of the pan over steamed rice with a drizzle of Spicy Sweet Garlic Sauce (see recipe).

Featured Ingredient: Eggplant!

Hi! I'm Eggplant!

"I'm the star of this dish, the exciting Eggplant! You might think of me as a vegetable, but I'm actually a berry! Not only that, but I'm large and oblong (that's a long oval shape), and I'm purple! Some of my eggplant cousins are short and plump, and have white streaks, but we all wear the same perky green cap, and we're all good to eat!"

History

The eggplant was called the Mad Apple for hundreds of years before people were actually brave enough to try eating it. People worldwide thought it was poisonous, so it took a long time before someone was brave enough to take a bite.

Eggplant is widely believed to be native to India. In fact, it is known as the King of Vegetables in India. Eggplant still grows wild in India!

Chinese emperors enjoyed eggplant way back to as early as 600 BC. How's this for an interesting fact: Ladies of China found it fashionable to stain their teeth black way back in 600 BC, and they would use eggplant skins to make a black dye for their teeth!

Eggplant eventually made their way around the world with global explorers, but people used them more for table decoration than food for hundreds of years because they were afraid they'd be poisoned if they ate them!

One story tells that when eggplant was brand new to France, King Louis XIV wanted to impress guests at his royal table, so he had his gardeners plant eggplant in his garden. Do you think his diners were impressed? They were not! They described the eggplant as "fruits as large as pears, but with bad qualities."

King Louis XIV cooked them and served them to his guests anyway, without them knowing. And they didn't get sick! This is because he had done his research first and found out that once eggplant mature, they are safe to eat and are actually quite delicious!

Anatomy & Etymology

Eggplants are technically berries, not vegetables! Are you surprised? What are some other fruits commonly mistaken for vegetables? How about cucumbers and tomatoes?

Did you know that eggplant and tomatoes are related? That's right—they both belong to the Nightshade family, along with potatoes and peppers.

The standard eggplant is oval or pear-shaped, glossy-skinned, or purple. However, there are many different varieties of eggplant around the world. For example, eggplant can be white, green, round, small, long, purple-and-white speckled, cream-colored, or deep purple.

With eggplant, bigger isn't necessarily better. The smaller the eggplant, the sweeter it tends to taste. Eggplant does have seeds, but once they've developed seeds, their flesh becomes pretty bitter. That's why it's best to harvest eggplant before their seeds become too big.

Europeans gave these berries the name "Eggplant" in the middle of the 18th century because the variety they knew looked exactly like Goose Eggs!

Another name for eggplant is "aubergine" (ober-zheen), adapted from the original Arabic name al-badinjan.

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

When buying eggplant, look for smooth skin, even color, heavy-in-the-hand, and no bruises. Squeeze the eggplant gently with a finger and then let go. If the eggplant is fresh, it will bounce back again. The stems should be bright and green.

Store eggplant overnight at room temperature and plan to use it soon after bringing it home. If you are storing it for longer than a day, wrap it in a plastic bag and place it on a shelf in the fridge.

The skin of the eggplant is edible, but many recipes advise peeling the skin before cooking because the flesh is sweeter and more tender, while the skin can be tough.

Eggplant is a very watery vegetable, and this is why many people like to salt their sliced eggplant before frying them to remove some of the excess moisture. They also used to be much more bitter, so people would add salt to them to cut the bitterness. Eventually, growers bred the bitterness out of the plants. Eggplant can be roasted, baked, fried, sauteed, grilled, braised, stir-fried, and stuffed. The only way we wouldn't suggest eating eggplant is raw. While it is not harmful in small doses, eggplant is so much more

delicious when cooked.

Eggplant is in peak season from August to March—they love hot weather!

Nutrition

The color of a fruit or vegetable tells us what nutrient it contains (nature is amazing!). Orange vegetables and fruits have special nutrients. So do green vegetables. Purple eggplant also contain a nutrient that gives them their color: anthocyanin. It's an antioxidant also found in red or purple grapes, blackberries, blueberries, plums, red cabbage, red onions, and prunes.

Brains! Did you know that the brain is made up primarily of fat? Eggplant has a unique nutrient that's been shown to protect the fats in our brain. When we safeguard the fats in our brain, we make it possible for brain cells to send signals back and forth to each other—which is a very good thing! We need our brain cells to talk to each other!

Fiber! We often talk about fiber when we reveal our Surprise Ingredient, and that's because vegetables and fruits contain a lot of fiber. Eggplant are no exception. What does fiber help with? Digestion! And which body parts are responsible for digestion? Many, but namely our stomach and intestines. We definitely want to keep those running in tip-top shape!