

# Badhinjan bi-laban

## Eggplant with yogurt

1 medium eggplant  
 1 cup drained yogurt  
 2 cloves garlic – minced  
 1 tablespoon sesame oil  
 ½ teaspoon cumin, coriander  
 Salt to taste  
 1 teaspoon **atraf al-tib**<sup>1</sup> ([Spice mix recipe on page 45](#))  
 ½ teaspoon **nigella**<sup>2</sup>

**Serving size: 10**

Cut off the stem of the eggplant. Parboil or roast eggplant. Strip off the skin and chop small. Add eggplant to yogurt and garlic. Heat sesame oil in a small pan and add cumin and coriander; fry until fragrant. Add this back to the eggplant. Add atraf al-tib or your own spice mixture. Salt to taste. Sprinkle with nigella. Serve with bread or vegetable crudites.

Chef's notes:

### Can't leave out the eggplant

I wanted to ensure that vegetables, especially eggplant, were featured in my recipes for Ottoman cuisine. Eggplant was ubiquitous to the genre and it would be a mishap not to include it. Eggplant is mentioned in the Derschwan's Tagebuch as being stuffed much like a dolmas recipe. The Chirvânî addition to the Al Baghdadi provides us with a repetition of Baghdâdî recipes which contained beet stalks, squashes, and eggplants with yogurt and spices. He translated these recipes into Turkish without any modification, using their Arabic names and without changing the recipes. They must have been considered perfect as they were.

As a result, I used two of these transitional recipes found in both the Baghdad Cookery Book and Şirvânî's 16th century addition to the first Turkish source of court cuisine. Among the few recipes that does not contain meat products, these gave me vegetarian options that are appropriate for any menu.

The source of the recipe is an Arabic manuscript that was eventually to become the first Turkish cookbook. Although most vegetables were combined with meat, this option gave us what may be the precursor to the vegetarian "Baba Ghanouj."

*Badhinjan Bi-Laban*

*Take medium sized eggplants, cut off its leaves and half its stems, and boil it in water and salt. Then take it out, dry it well and throw it in yogurt and garlic. Refine fresh sesame oil with a bit of cumin and coriander and throw it on it. Sprinkle a bit of mixed spices (atraf al tib) and nigella on it, and use it.*

*- Kitābh al-Tabikh (A Baghdad Cookery Book)<sup>3</sup>*