

Imam Bayildi

Makes about 25–30 crostini

This great spiced aubergine is so versatile — delicious on top of crostini with a blob of crème fraîche, but fab too with grilled or barbecued lamb. The mixture is best if it can sit around for an hour or more to let the flavours develop and mingle.

3 medium aubergines (about 850 g (13/4 lb)), chopped into 2 cm (3/4 in) cubes
50 ml (13/4 fl oz) olive oil
1 tbsp cumin seeds, ground
3/4 tbsp coriander seeds, ground
1/4 tsp ground cardamom seeds (from the green cardamom pod)
3 large cloves garlic, crushed or grated
450 g (1 lb) tomatoes, peeled and chopped, or 1 tin chopped tomatoes
salt and pepper
50 g (2 oz) sultanas
2 tbsp chopped mint, coriander or parsley

Boil the aubergines in water with 1 tsp salt for 5 minutes. This will prevent them from absorbing too much oil. Drain them completely. In a pan, heat a little olive oil. Add the spices and cook for about 10 to 20 seconds, being careful not to let them burn. Quickly add the garlic and aubergines and stir fry for a minute. Now add the tomatoes, salt and pepper, and sultanas, and cook uncovered until the tomatoes have softened and the mixture has thickened. Add the herbs. When ready to serve, spoon a little onto each of the Crostini (page 41) and add 1/2 tsp blob of crème fraîche and a leaf of mint or coriander.

NOTE To peel tomatoes easily, put into boiling water for 10–20 seconds, then remove and peel.