





# Georgian Eggplant Rolls

Рулети з баклажана

SERVES 4 TO 6

2 large or 4 medium Chinese eggplants, about 2 pounds total

Salt

About 1 cup sunflower oil, for frying

## FOR THE FILLING

1½ cups walnut halves, toasted

½ cup tightly packed fresh cilantro leaves and cut-up stems, roughly chopped

¼ cup tightly packed fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves, roughly chopped

1 green onion, white and green parts, roughly chopped

1 garlic clove, minced

2 teaspoons red wine vinegar

½ teaspoon ground coriander

½ teaspoon ground fenugreek

¼ teaspoon ground cumin

¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper

3 tablespoons water, or more if needed

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 tablespoon Pomegranate Molasses (page 176), for serving

Pomegranate seeds and fresh cilantro leaves, for serving

Eggplant rolls are one of my favorite Georgian appetizers. They are the ultimate crowd-pleaser and are my first choice for taking to a vegan potluck. Make sure to sprinkle them with pomegranate seeds right before serving. And don't skip the pomegranate molasses. It really makes these rolls shine.

Line a large sheet pan with paper towels. Cut off the stem and blossom end from each eggplant. Using a mandoline or a large, sharp knife, cut each eggplant lengthwise into slices ⅛ inch thick. You should have about eight slices. Generously sprinkle the eggplant slices on both sides with salt and lay them in a single layer on the prepared pan. Let them sit for 15 minutes to draw out the excess moisture. Pat the eggplant slices completely dry with paper towels.

Line the sheet pan with fresh paper towels. In a large frying pan, heat ¼ cup of the oil over medium-high heat. Working in batches to avoid crowding, add the eggplant slices and fry, turning once, until deep brown on both sides, about 1 minute on each side. Transfer to the prepared pan to drain. Repeat with the remaining slices, adding more oil as needed. Let the slices cool to room temperature.

To make the filling, in a food processor, combine the walnuts, cilantro, parsley, green onion, garlic, vinegar, coriander, fenugreek, cumin, and cayenne and pulse until all the ingredients are finely chopped. With the processor running, start adding the water, 1 tablespoon at a time. You are aiming for a smooth, thick paste. Add more water if needed. Season the mixture to taste with salt and black pepper. (The filling can be made up to 2 days in advance and stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator. You will have more filling than you need for the rolls. Use the leftover filling in the Rustic Vegetable Salad with Walnut Dressing (page 45).

To assemble and serve the rolls, spread about 2 teaspoons of the filling on each eggplant slice, roll up the slices, and arrange the rolls, seam side down, on a serving platter. Drizzle the rolls with the pomegranate molasses and top with the pomegranate seeds and cilantro. Any leftover rolls will keep in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.





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