Sides / China

# Cantonese Garlic-Braised Eggplant

Eggplant pieces flash-fried until their centres are silky and their skins go glossy, then braised in a glossy, deeply savoury garlic sauce that clings to each piece like lacquer — the kind of dish that makes plain white rice disappear.

**Time** 35 min **Servings** 4

## What you'll need.

- ☐ 100 parts Chinese or Japanese eggplant, cut into 5 cm batons
- ☐ 30 parts Neutral oil for frying
- ☐ 8 parts Garlic cloves, minced
- ☐ 3 parts Fresh ginger, minced
- ☐ 10 parts Soy sauce (gluten-free tamari)
- ☐ 5 parts Rice wine or dry sherry
- ☐ 20 parts Vegetable stock or water
- ☐ 4 parts Cornstarch, dissolved in water (1:1)
- ☐ 1 parts Dried chilli flakes and white pepper

## Let's make it.

**01** Toss eggplant batons with a generous pinch of salt in a colander. Set over the sink for 20 minutes. The eggplant will release significant moisture. Pat completely dry with paper towels before frying — wet eggplant absorbs three times as much oil.

**02** Heat oil in a wok over high heat until smoking. Add eggplant batons in a single layer — do not crowd, fry in batches. Cook without moving for 90 seconds until the contact side is deeply golden. Toss and fry the other sides, 1–2 minutes total. The eggplant should be golden and softened but not falling apart. Remove with a slotted spoon.

**03** Pour off all but a thin film of oil from the wok. Reduce heat to medium. Add garlic, ginger, and chilli flakes. Stir-fry for 30–45 seconds until deeply fragrant and the garlic turns pale gold at the edges. Do not let the garlic go brown — in a quick braise, bitter garlic has no time to mellow.

**04** Add soy sauce, rice wine, and stock to the wok and stir to combine. Return the fried eggplant to the wok. Toss gently to coat. Bring to a simmer and cook 2–3 minutes until the eggplant has absorbed the sauce flavours. Stir the cornstarch slurry and drizzle into the simmering sauce while tossing continuously. Cook 30–60 seconds until the sauce thickens and clings to every piece like a glaze. Serve over white rice.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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