



Aubergine, courgette
and basil gratin

AUBERGINE, COURGETTE AND BASIL GRATIN

A summer gratin of the non-creamy variety — something to eat with roast lamb or a green salad. I also rather like it cold.

Serves 4-6

750g aubergines, cut into 1cm cubes
Salt and pepper
250g courgettes
Extra-virgin olive oil
1 big red onion, peeled and finely sliced
Leaves from 4 bushy sprigs of thyme
6 garlic cloves, crushed
4 medium tomatoes, chopped
3 tbsp red-wine vinegar

3 big handfuls
of basil

50g Parmesan,
grated

Put the aubergine bits in a colander, toss them lightly with a sprinkling of salt and leave for 30 minutes. This isn't essential, but there can be a latent bitterness even in modern aubergines, and salting helps draw out the juices. When they've had their time, rinse them under the tap and pat dry with kitchen paper.

Slice the courgettes lengthways with a potato peeler into thin ribbons, and toss with a splash of oil and some salt. Keep to one side.

Heat the oven to 180C/Gas Mark 4. Meanwhile, heat 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil in a large frying pan and add the onion, half the thyme leaves and

a pinch of salt. Cook for 5-6 minutes over a medium heat, until soft but not brown. Turn the heat up high, add another 3 tbsp olive oil to the pan and throw in the aubergines and the garlic.

Cook, stirring constantly at first, for 8-10 minutes, or until the aubergine is soft and starting to brown. Add the chopped tomatoes and vinegar, stir in and bubble away over a medium heat for 4-5 minutes, until everything is soft, then mix in the torn basil leaves and half the grated Parmesan and cook for another minute or so. Season generously.

Spread the aubergine mixture evenly across the bottom of a gratin dish 23cm x 23cm in size. Top with the ribbons of courgette, overlapping them slightly in a single layer, then sprinkle with the remaining Parmesan and thyme. Splash with a few streaks of olive oil. Bake for 40-45 minutes, or until golden brown on top and bubbling at the edges.