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## THAI BASIL EGGPLANT

SERVES 4 / PREP TIME: 5 MINUTES / COOK TIME: 10 MINUTES

*This is an easy, tasty stir-fry that takes just minutes to make but is satisfying, savory, and filling. You can use any kind of eggplant for this dish, but it works best with the smaller Asian varieties.*

2 eggplants

1 tablespoon vegetable or peanut oil

2 chile peppers, sliced

2 cloves garlic, finely chopped

Water

2 tablespoons fish sauce or oyster sauce\*

1 tablespoon brown sugar

1 bunch Thai or regular basil, leaves separated from the stems

Rice, cooked

1. Slice the eggplants into irregular shapes for easy turning in the pan (when sliced into small disks, they tend to stick to the bottom of the pan, making them difficult to flip or turn).
2. Heat a pan or wok over high or medium-high heat. Add the oil, chile peppers, and garlic. Stir until the garlic turns golden brown, being careful not to let it burn. Add the eggplant and stir.

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3. Add 1 cup of water and cover the pan or wok with a lid. Keep the lid closed until the eggplant is cooked, about 5 to 7 minutes (it turns from white to translucent when it is done). Almost all of the water will be evaporated at this point. If the eggplant is still not cooked through, add a little bit more water and keep the pan covered until the eggplant is ready.
4. Add the fish sauce and sugar, and stir. Add the basil and quickly stir to heat it but not any longer, so that it still retains its color. Turn off the heat immediately.
5. Immediately serve hot with rice.

*Cooking Tip: Oyster sauce can also be substituted for the fish sauce, which can be found in local Asian grocery stores and many regular supermarkets. Or, for a vegetarian dish, substitute soy sauce or salt.*

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## ABOUT EGGPLANT

A versatile, hearty vegetable, eggplant can be baked, sautéed, grilled, broiled, steamed, or braised in sauces. Beloved in Asian and Middle Eastern cuisines, they come in both the familiar globe or egg-shaped forms and slender, elongated ones. Modern hybrids dazzle in different colors, from nearly-black purple to beautiful green, pure white, and delightfully speckled.

## ABOUT BASIL

A fragrant, beloved herb that is related to mint, basil is popular in Mediterranean and Asian dishes, from salads to drinks. Its best friends are tomatoes, cheese, olive oil, pasta, oregano, ginger, and most meats and poultry. And who can resist pesto, that deliciously aromatic green sauce made with fresh basil, cheese, and olive oil?