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FRESH, FAST IRANIAN FOOD

EGGPLANT DISH MIRZA GHASEMI

Frances Sacco

FOR Esmail Javid, the dish mirza ghasemi evokes memories of the green fields and sparkling waters of Iran's Gilan province.

Its smoky eggplant flavour is typical of the original inhabitants of the northern province of Iran and is wonderful eaten with pita bread or as a side dish to fish.

"The trick is when you fry it, (keep going) until the ingredients are dried," he said.

"A lot of the food from Gilan is vegetarian and there are many flavours.

"We are famous for cooking."

Combining the flavours of smoky eggplant with tomato and garlic, this dish needs to be mixed well to achieve a smooth texture.

Mr Javid cooks Mirza Ghasemi for friends and family – and when he needs a quick meal.

"This is a good replacement for fast food," he said.

"All of it is very fresh and really good for your health."

Mr Javid is studying English at Navitas English College, Fairfield, and has always received a good



reaction from those lucky enough to try his cooking.

"My friends ask me to cook this for them," he said.

"Sometimes people don't like the texture of eggplant, but this is different because it is soft."

Folk stories attribute eggplant's central role in the cuisine of Iran's Gilan province to a revered gentleman who loved the vegetable.

"He made lots of different things with eggplant," Mr Javid said.

"That's why generation after generation have passed it down."

Located in the north of Iran, the Gilan province is quite different to the rest of the country. "It is peaceful and very green," he said. "It's very different to the rest of Iran."

Mr Javid and his wife spent two years in Indonesia before coming to Australia five months ago.

"I am a professional tailor and my wife is a designer," he said.



Esmail Javid with his traditional dish mirza ghasemi.





Esmeil's delicious vegetarian mirza ghasemi

Ingredients

1.5kg Eggplant
1kg Tomato
3 or 4 eggs
10-15 cloves of garlic
2 tbsp oil
salt, black pepper and
turmeric to season

Method

Grill all the eggplant. When cool, peel and chop finely with a knife or in a blender. Finely chop the garlic and fry it with turmeric in the oil on a medium heat until golden. Add the eggs to the fried garlic and mix well. Take a separate pan. Chop the tomatoes and fry them with eggplants. Add salt and pepper and mix again. Finally mix all the ingredients and fry until all the excess of water has evaporated.

Use a cast-iron pan to allow the eggplant, eggs and tomatoes to fry and mix well. Do not use a non-stick frying pan.