

Polpette di Melanzane alla Calabrese (Traditional Italian Eggplant Fritters)

Cooking Times & Servings

- **Prep Time:** 20 minutes
 - **Cook Time:** 15 minutes
 - **Total Time:** 35 minutes (plus cooling time for eggplant)
 - **Servings:** 6 (about 18–22 meatballs)
-

Ingredients

- **5 medium eggplants** (leave skin on)
 - **About 2 cups stale bread**, packed (or breadcrumbs; see tips)
 - **1 large egg**
 - **1/2 cup grated cheese** (Pecorino Romano or Parmigiano Reggiano)
 - **1 small bunch fresh parsley**, finely chopped (about 1/2 cup)
 - **Salt & black pepper**, to taste
 - **Neutral frying oil**, as needed (vegetable, canola, or sunflower)
-

Instructions

1. **Prep the eggplants.**
Wash and dry the eggplants. Remove the stems and cut each eggplant into **6 chunks**, keeping the skin on.
2. **Boil until tender.**
Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add eggplant chunks and cook for **20 minutes**.
3. **Drain, cool, and squeeze well.**
Drain the eggplant and let it cool. Once cool enough to handle, **squeeze out as much water as possible** (this is key for firm meatballs).
4. **Chop and mix the “meatball” base.**
Finely chop the eggplant (knife or pulse briefly). In a large bowl, combine: chopped eggplant + **soaked & squeezed stale bread** + egg + grated cheese + parsley + salt + pepper.
Mix until uniform.
5. **Shape.**
With slightly damp hands, form **teardrop-shaped** meatballs (or classic round).
6. **Fry.**
Heat 1–1.5 inches of oil in a deep skillet to **350°F**. Fry in batches for **about 2 minutes per**

side, until deeply golden.

7. Drain and serve.

Remove with a spider strainer or slotted spoon. Drain on paper towels. Serve **hot or warm**.

Tips & Tricks (Nonna-Style)

- **Squeeze like you mean it:** watery eggplant = meatballs that fall apart.
- **No stale bread?** Use **1 1/2 to 2 cups breadcrumbs** and add a splash of milk or water only if needed.
- **Extra Calabrese kick:** add **1/2 tsp crushed red pepper** or a spoon of **Calabrian chili paste** to the mixture.
- **Serving ideas:** lemon wedges, marinara, garlic yogurt sauce, or tucked into a sandwich roll.