

Packed with goodness, it's a stroke of aubergine-ius

Nightshades are the flavour of the month, literally. There are several in season right now, but this recipe showcases aubergines and tomatoes, 2 of the most colourful offerings from the nightshade plant family.

Aubergines are a great source of fibre along with vitamins B1 and B6, potassium, copper, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, niacin, and folic acid. While they are typically always thought of as purple, they grow in a variety of colours including green, orange, and yellow. The classic purple variety have high levels of the anthocyanin flavonoid nasunin in the skin, a potent antioxidant thought to protect cell membranes from damage.

Tomatoes are excellent sources of vitamins C, B6, and K, carotenes, biotin, pantothenic acid, niacin, folic acid, and fibre. Their carotene content increases as they ripen, with red tomatoes containing up to four times the beta-carotene of green tomatoes.

This recipe is great for sharing, and as we are opening up to bigger gatherings, why not try this tasty addition to any nibbles selection.

Tomato and Aubergine dip

(serves 8-10)

- 1 medium aubergine
- 4 medium salad tomatoes
- 20-25g of parmesan (finely grated)
- 2 cloves of garlic
- zest of ½ a lemon (finely grated)
- 2-3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- pinch of black pepper
- 6-8 basil leaves (to taste)



Optional extras: dried chilli flakes, extra oil to make a looser dip

Heat the oven to 180°. Cut the aubergine and tomatoes into one-inch cubes and coat them in the oil, lemon zest, and black pepper. Spread them out on a baking tray and add the garlic cloves still inside their casing. Pop in the oven for 30-35 minutes until soft and starting to colour.

Once cooked allow to cool slightly before processing further, cut the ends off the garlic cloves and squeeze the insides into the vegetable mix. Blend in a food processor until smooth (or leave slightly coarse if you prefer the texture).

Whilst still warm stir in the parmesan and finely chop the basil to add just before serving.

Lovely served with seeded crackers and a selection of crudites!

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