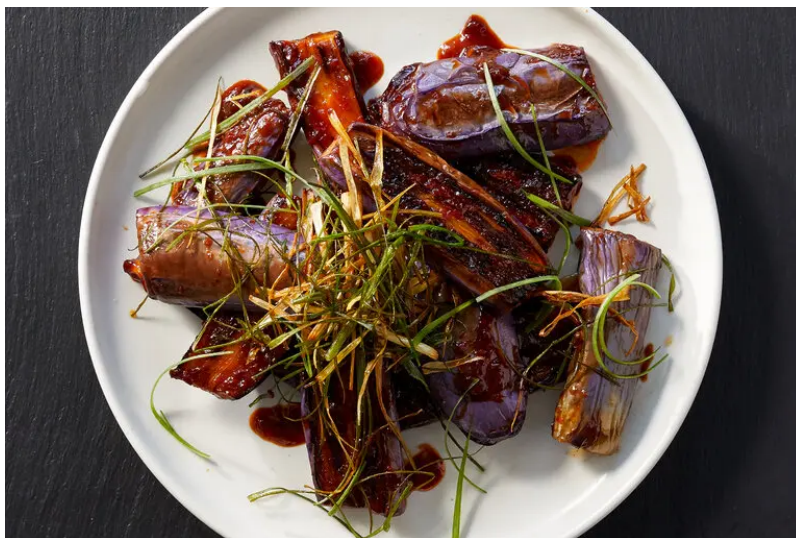


Gochujang-Glazed Eggplant With Fried Scallions

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Christopher Simpson for The New York Times. Food Stylist: Simon Andrews.

Total Time 45 minutes

Rating ★★★★★ (3,711)

Loosely inspired by the Korean banchan gaji bokkeum (stir-fried eggplant), this recipe keeps the eggplant in large pieces and sears it over high heat, yielding beautifully cooked flesh and still-violet skin. Though gaji bokkeum is traditionally soy sauce-based, my mother uses gochujang, the fermented Korean chile paste, for added sweetness and heat. The result is divine: As the sticky red sauce clings to the fried eggplant spears, it caramelizes in the heat of the pan and provides a glossy finish. The real star of this dish, though, is the scallion oil. The tangle of thinly sliced scallions crisps in olive oil, lending its oniony flavor to the oil, which is then used to cook the eggplant. This dish is salty, spicy and sweet — everything you want in a banchan — and tastes great with a bowl of fresh white rice.

INGREDIENTS

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

1 pound Asian eggplant (about 3 large; preferably Korean, or Chinese or Japanese), halved lengthwise and cut into 4- to 5-inch segments

1 teaspoon kosher salt

2 tablespoons gochujang

1 tablespoon soy sauce

2 packed teaspoons dark brown sugar

PREPARATION

Step 1

Place the eggplant in a colander set inside a large bowl or the sink. Sprinkle with the salt, toss to combine and let sit for 30 minutes to remove excess moisture.

Step 2

Meanwhile, in a small bowl, add the gochujang, soy sauce, brown sugar, sesame oil and garlic. Whisk to combine, then set aside.

Step 3

1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
2 garlic cloves, finely grated
½ cup olive oil
4 scallions, trimmed, cut into 3-inch segments, then very thinly sliced lengthwise, white and green parts separated

To a large nonstick skillet, add the olive oil and the white parts of the scallions. Turn the heat to medium and fry the scallions, stirring often, until crispy and evenly browned, about 8 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the fried scallions onto a paper towel.

Step 4

Reserve a small handful of raw scallion greens for garnish, then fry the remaining scallion greens in the oil until crispy and lightly browned, 3 to 5 minutes. Transfer fried scallion greens onto a paper towel.

Step 5

Remove the skillet from the heat and carefully pour the hot scallion oil into a glass container or measuring cup.

Step 6

After the 30 minutes of salting, dry the eggplant segments with a paper towel. Place the skillet over medium-high heat and add 2 tablespoons of the reserved scallion oil.

Step 7

When the oil starts to shimmer and you see a wisp of smoke, add half the eggplant, cut sides down, and fry until browned and starting to soften, 2 to 3 minutes. Flip once and cook another minute on the other side. Transfer to a plate, add 2 more tablespoons of scallion oil back to the pan, and repeat to fry the second batch of eggplants. (If you are lucky enough to have any scallion oil left, use it to fry eggs or to dress a salad.)

Step 8

Finally, sauce the eggplants: Add the first batch of eggplants back to the pan alongside the second batch. Reduce the heat to medium-low and pour the reserved gochujang sauce over the eggplants. Toss until evenly coated and the gochujang starts to caramelize, about 1 minute.

Step 9

Plate the eggplants on a large platter and garnish with the fried scallions and the reserved raw scallion greens. Serve immediately. (To store for later, transfer to a resealable container and keep in the refrigerator for 3 to 5 days. This dish tastes great cold, straight out of the fridge, or at room temperature.)

Private Notes

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