



Mediterranean Eggplant with Za'atar Buttermilk Sauce

Inspired by Chef Yotam Ottolenghi and Chef Sami Tamimi 2002

United Kingdom – Signature Dish - Eggplant with Buttermilk Sauce

- 3 medium sized fresh eggplants
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1 to 2 teaspoons fresh or dried thyme leaves
- sea salt and ground black pepper to taste

Za'atar Buttermilk Sauce

- 1/2 cup buttermilk, divided
- 1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- Pinch of salt

Garnish:

1 fresh pomegranate
1 teaspoon za'atar (spice)
Thyme sprigs or leaves as desired

Cutting the Eggplant: Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F.

Cut the eggplants in half lengthways, cutting straight through the green stalk. Use a small sharp knife to make 3 or 4 parallel incisions in the cut side of each eggplant half, without cutting through to the skin. Repeat at a 45-degree angle to get a diamond-shaped pattern.

Preparation for Roasting: Line a baking pan with parchment paper; place the eggplant halves, cut side up, on a baking pan. Brush them with all the olive oil, which will be absorbed by the flesh. Sprinkle with the thyme leaves, salt, and black pepper.

Roast Eggplant: Place in the preheated 400-degree F oven; roast for 35-40 minutes or until flesh is tender and lightly browned. Remove from the oven and allow to cool completely.

Prepare the Za'atar Buttermilk Sauce: Place half of the buttermilk and all the remaining sauce ingredients in a medium sized bowl; whisk the sauce, adding additional buttermilk until desired thicker consistency. Place in refrigerator until serving.

Removing Seeds from Pomegranate: Hint from the original recipe: Cut the pomegranate in half horizontally. Hold one half over a bowl, with the cut side against your palm, and use the back of a wooden spoon or a rolling pin to gently knock on the pomegranate skin. Continue beating with increasing power until the seeds start coming out naturally and falling through your fingers into the bowl. Once all are there, sift through the seeds to remove any bits of white skin or membrane.

For Serving: Place eggplant halves on serving platter. Carefully spoon buttermilk sauce over the eggplant halves without covering the stalks. Sprinkle za'atar spice and thyme leaves over the sauce; dot with pomegranate seeds over the top and garnish with small thyme sprigs or leaves. Serves: 6

Cook's Note: If you don't have any buttermilk, you can make a substitute by adding one Tablespoon lemon juice to 1 cup of milk; stir and let it aside for about 5 minutes.

Signature Recipe Story and Recipe Information: are located on p.187 and p.372 in *Signature Dishes That Matter*

For the original recipe See:

[Plenty Ottolenghi](#)

<https://sharelovenotsecrets.com/eggplant-with-buttermilk-sauce-ottolenghi/>

or <https://www.thedailymeal.com/eggplant-buttermilk-sauce-recipe>

About the Recipe: Chef Yotam Ottolenghi and Chef Sami Tamimi in 2002 highlighted ingredients like eggplant, Greek yogurt, Za'atar spice, and pomegranate that were fresh and had bright herb flavors. This stimulated a global appetite for Eastern Mediterranean food. The recipe is easy to make and makes a visually attractive holiday vegetable dish.