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Barbarella Eggplant

Inventory, lb : 0



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Description/Taste

Barbarella eggplants are medium sized measuring about four to six inches in diameter. This eggplant has a unique squat shape that is round with slightly grooved sides. The outer skin is glossy with a deep purple hue and when ripe forms a tender white halo under its purple calyx. The inner flesh is dense and a creamy white color, containing numerous small seeds and offers a mild nutty flavor with a slight sweetness.

Seasons/Availability

Barbarella eggplant is available in the late spring and early summer months.

Current Facts

The Barbarella eggplant, botanically known as a cultivator of Solanum melongena, is a member of the Solanaceae or nightshade family. Like many newer varieties of eggplant the Barbarella is known for its flavor which is less bitter than traditional eggplant. Also known as a Violetta di Sicilia type the Barbrella eggplant is a hybrid variety that can be found predominately at farmers markets and specialty stores.

Nutritional Value

Eggplants such as the Barbarella that feature deep purple skin are known to be rich in the phytochemical Nasunin and also are high in dietary fiber, both of which have been shown to be beneficial in promoting heart health and lowering cholesterol levels in the body when consumed. Anthocyanins in eggplant are not only responsible for the purple pigment of its skin but also offer antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties promoting healthy cell function and are being studied for their ability to ward off certain forms of cancer.

Applications

The versatile Barbarella eggplant can be used in an array of cuisines such as French, Italian, Thai, Chinese and Indian. It can be grilled, roasted, sautéed or fried. Its rounded shape makes it ideal for hollowing out, stuffing with rice or meats, and baking. Barbarella eggplants can also be roasted whole then the flesh used to make baba ghanoush, tapenade and chutney. When cooked the weightiness and texture of the Barbarella eggplant's flesh make it perfect for use as a meat substitute in preparations such as eggplant parmesan, ratatouille and curries. Newer varieties of eggplant such as the Barbarella should have little bitterness though if they are over mature they may take on a bitter flavor. To reduce the bitterness of eggplant, once sliced it can be salted and allowed to sit, a process called "degorging" which draws the bitterness out of the eggplant. Barbarella eggplant is highly perishable and should be stored in a cool dry place and used ideally within two to three days. Salting can also help reduce the amount of oil that the slices will soak up when cooked. Refrigeration should be avoided as the cold can lead to premature browning and breakdown of the flesh.

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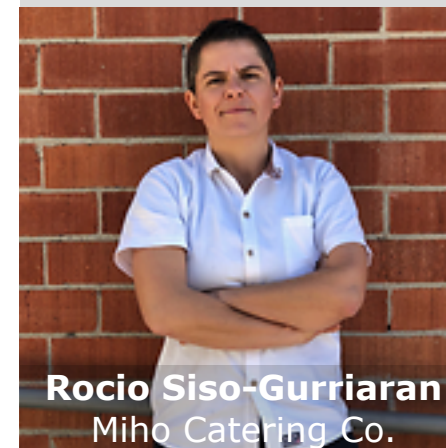
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