

## SARDINIAN-STYLE STUFFED EGGPLANT (MELANZANE RIPIENNE ALLA SARDA)

from Salvatore Gisellu, **master chef** at **Urban Crust restaurant**

Gisellu, a Lake Highlands resident whose acclaimed restaurant is located in Plano, says this dish brings back warm memories of childhood. “Melanzane Ripiene Alla Sarda is the ultimate Italian comfort food,” Gisellu says. “My mother has made this dish forever; I can remember her making it since I was 5 years old. She always made it on Thursdays for lunch.” Chef Gisellu says the dish is also perfect as a late-night snack. These days, his wife Jeanne Marie loves the dish, and she regularly makes it for their sons, Matteo and Lucas.

### INGREDIENTS

#### Serves 6-8

- 🍴 2 large Italian eggplants, firm and free of blemishes
- 🍴 ½ c extra virgin olive oil
- 🍴 1 tsp fresh oregano, chopped
- 🍴 1 tsp fresh basil, chopped
- 🍴 1 tsp fresh mint, chopped
- 🍴 1 tsp fresh Italian parsley
- 🍴 1 medium onion, chopped
- 🍴 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 🍴 1 lb fresh ground veal
- 🍴 1 c white wine dry
- 🍴 ½ c your homemade tomato sauce
- 🍴 ½ c grated pecorino sardo cheese (or Romano)
- 🍴 ½ c Italian plain bread crumbs
- 🍴 1 whole egg
- 🍴 salt and pepper

- Preheat the oven to 300 degrees.
- Cut the eggplant into 2-inch rings; remove the inside part, leaving some of the pulp attached to the skin.
- Brush the rings with oil, and season with salt and pepper; set them up in a baking sheet, and roast for 15 minutes.
- Sprinkle the pulp with salt, wrap with a paper towel, and put some weight on.
- After 10–15 minutes, remove the paper towel from the eggplant, rinse with cold water (to remove the salt and the bitterness), and chop.
- Heat up a large sauté pan, add oil, sweat onions and garlic with the herbs, brown the veal, and season with salt and pepper. Deglaze the pan with the wine, remove from stove, and add tomato sauce, cheese, breadcrumbs and the egg; season well. Serves 6-8.