**Alex’s Eggplant Parmigiano with Fresh Mozzarella**

**By Alex Guarnaschelli for Amy’s Bread Chef Sandwiches for Good**

Serves 4-6

The sauce:

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

3 medium yellow onions, peeled, halved and cut into thin slices

6 cloves garlic, peeled and “pressed” or micro planed

Kosher salt

1 teaspoon red pepper flakes

1 tablespoon granulated sugar

Three 28-ounce cans of whole San Marzano Plum tomatoes

2-3 cups water

The eggplant:

2 medium eggplants (about 21/2 pounds total) washed and cut into ½ inch thick rounds

Kosher salt

Olive oil

11/2 pounds Fresh Mozzarella (Maplebrook Farm), cut into thin slices

1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, grated

½ cup Provolone cheese, grated

1. Make the tomato sauce: In a large skillet, heat the olive oil. Add the onion and garlic and season with salt and the red pepper flakes. Cook for 3-5 minutes until the onions become translucent. Add the sugar and the canned tomatoes. Use a wooden spoon to break up some of the whole tomatoes and cook 10-15 minutes over medium heat, stirring from time to time. Taste for seasoning, the tomatoes should be fairly broken down and the flavors coming together. Cook for another few minutes if the tomatoes still taste like they need a little more time to break down.

Set aside to cool.

2. Prepare the eggplant:  Arrange the eggplant rounds in a single layer on 2 baking sheets. Sprinkle with salt, on both sides of each slice, and allow it to sit for about an hour. Salting it draws out the liquid and bitter flavor. After an hour, rinse with cold water and dry them thoroughly with a kitchen towel.

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3. Bake the eggplant:  Preheat the oven to 375 F. Arrange the slices in single layers back on the baking sheets and drizzle with olive oil.  Bake in a convection or conventional oven until browned and somewhat dry, 30 or more minutes. At this point they should be tender but not so soft that they fall apart.

4. Assembly: In a 17x11 inch-baking dish, spoon about ¼ of the tomato sauce on the bottom. Top with a layer of the eggplant. The eggplant slices can overlap slightly. Top with about 1/3 of the mozzarella slices. Sprinkle with about 1/4 of the Parmesan and provolone cheeses. Spoon sauce and repeat the same two more times to make 3 layers. Hold back the remaining mozzarella. Place the dish in the top part of the oven and cook until the cheese is melted and bubbly, 15-20 minutes.

5. Place a square piece of  eggplant parm on a square ciabatta roll, top with remaining mozzarella and toast in Panini press to crisp the bread. Serve and enjoy!