

# Orange Blossom Water

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[http://www.orangeblossomwater.net/index.php/2010/07/23/yalanji-al-bathenjan /](http://www.orangeblossomwater.net/index.php/2010/07/23/yalanji-al-bathenjan/)

## Yalanji Al-Bathenjan

From: Family Recipe / Servings: 4 - 5 People

16 long and thin eggplants,  
each approximately 3.5 - 4.5 inches  
(8.9 - 11.4 cm) long

You can see in the picture long and thin eggplants  
choose long eggplants that each approximately 3.5  
- 4.5 inches (8.9 - 11.4 cm) long, then rinse  
eggplants with water and drain.

### Filling

1.1 kg red tomatoes, peeled and  
seeds removed then cut into medium  
cubes

Remove the hat of the eggplants, and cut off the  
stem of the eggplants as you see in the picture.

1 medium red onion, finely chopped

Cut a small piece from the top of the eggplants to  
have a diameter of the top part of the eggplant  
equal to 3/4 - 1 inch (1.9 - 2.5 cm).

2 cups finely chopped flat parsley  
leaves

Hollow eggplants from one end with the squash  
corer leaving about 1/16 inch (0.06 cm) thick shell  
all around, and be careful to leave one end of  
eggplant intact, if you don't have squash corer try  
to use apple corer.

1/2 cup chopped walnuts, (medium  
chopped)

250 g Egyptian short grain rice

Set aside.

Boiling water, for soaking rice

### Filling

150 ml olive oil

Bring red tomatoes.

1/2 tsp Turkish coffee powder

Peel tomatoes completely, do not use the method of  
boiling tomatoes then peel them, it is very easy to  
bring a knife and peel tomatoes without boiling  
them.

3/4 tsp lemon salt (citric acid)

2 tsp salt

Cut peeled tomatoes into half.

Dash of black pepper

Remove seeds.

### For Soaking Eggplants

Cut tomatoes into medium cubes.

Water	Set chopped tomatoes aside.
Crushed garlic	Finely chop onion, and set aside.
Dried mint	Finely chop parsley leaves, and set aside.
Salt	Chop walnuts (medium chopped), and set aside.
<u>Tomato Sauce</u>	This is Egyptian rice.
500 ml water (explained in directions about this water)	Rinse rice with cold water in several changes.
2 L water, extra	Bring water to boil.
1/2 cup tomato paste	Soak rice in boiled water for 10 minutes, then drain and rinse with cold water in several changes.
Salt - if needed	Transfer rice to a bowl.
	Add chopped onion to the rice.
	Add chopped parsley leaves.
	Add chopped walnuts.
	Add chopped tomatoes.
	Add olive oil, Turkish coffee powder, lemon salt (citric acid), salt and black pepper.
	Mix until combine.
	Drain the filling in a strainer over a bowl, but make sure to reserve the water which you get in the bowl because you will need it later.
	<u>For Soaking Eggplants</u>
	In a bowl, add water, crushed garlic, dried mint and salt.
	Soak eggplants in this water for 10 minutes.
	After 10 minutes, shake eggplants and get rid of excess water from the inside of the eggplant.

Stuff eggplants with the filling fully to brim.

After that, press the eggplant slightly using your thumb and index and run your fingers from bottom up to top to remove excess rice, but make sure that the eggplants are still filled to the brim.

Return excess filling to the bowl of the filling.

Set aside.

### Tomato Sauce

To prepare tomato sauce, bring a pot and put 500 ml of the water that you saved in step 40, and add 2 liters extra water, then add tomato paste. Heat the tomato sauce, don't boil.

Meanwhile, prepare a large deep pot, and put the round cooling rack on the bottom of the pot. The round cooling rack works as a protection for the stuffed eggplants; to prevent the direct contact between the stuffed eggplants and the heat.

Arrange the eggplants, in the same way as you see in the picture.

Put a plate over the stuffed eggplants.

Add a weight over the plate, this is a piece of marble (actually there is a special tool to be used for mehshi, but mine is broken).

Add the tomato sauce.

Turn on heat, and keep on high heat until it starts to boil.

Once the sauce is boiling vigorously, remove the weight but keep the plate.

Lower the heat, and taste if you need salt so you can add salt, cover the pot and cook over very low heat for one hour.

After one hour, time to serve, I use "pot strainer" to

help me to pour out the sauce through the strainer, discard the sauce.

Transfer yalanji Al-Bathenjan to a plate one by one, keep with you a bowl with cold water, wet your hand then each time take yalanji and transfer to a plate, cold water helps you to handle the hot yalanji.

Serve Yalanji Al-Bathenjan cold.

### **Notes and Tips**

Some people don't soak the eggplants in the mixture of (water, crushed garlic, dried mint, and salt), but soaking them gives a unique flavor.

In Syria, we don't add cinnamon, cloves, all spice or any spice to any kind of dish except in few case and that's when the recipe specifies the spices such as in [Ozee](#), so please don't add any spices if my recipe didn't tell you to add, otherwise you will not get the traditional taste. Yalanji Al-Bathenjan doesn't need any spices, and that's very clear in the recipe.