GRILLED EGGPLANT WITH GARLIC & HERBS

For today's Timken-inspired recipe, we present a pairing of Giovanni Francesco Barbieri's 17th century masterpiece, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, with Italian eggplant. Glorified by some, detested by others, one can identify similarities between this divisive vegetable and Guercino's interpretation of the biblical parable beyond the deep purple colors found in both. We invite you to expand your culinary loyalties with this **Roasted Eggplant with Fresh Ricotta** recipe, a dish designed to win over the most judgmental palate.
GRILLED EGGPLANT WITH FRESH RICOTTA
Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

Roasted eggplant:
- 3 medium Italian eggplants
- 1/2 teaspoon minced fresh oregano
- 2 Tablespoons minced fresh parsley
- 3 cloves fresh garlic, minced
- 2 Tablespoons lemon zest
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 3/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp black pepper

Fresh ricotta:
- 2 cups whole milk
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 2 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- Pinch of salt
- Cheesecloth

DIRECTIONS

Heat oven to 400° F.

Line colander with 2-3 pieces of cheesecloth and place over medium mixing bowl. Set aside.

In a medium mixing bowl, combine oregano, parsley, minced garlic, lemon zest, red wine vinegar, olive oil and salt and pepper, whisking to combine.

Wash and cut eggplants on a diagonal and into 1/2-inch-thick slices. Add to mixing bowl and toss to evenly distribute the dressing on the eggplant slices.

Place eggplant slices onto a baking sheet and in a single layer. Reserve dressing to baste the slices while roasting.

Cook eggplant for 20-25 minutes until tender and lightly brown, basting with the reserved dressing halfway through roasting.

Halfway through the roasting, prepare the ricotta by combining whole milk and heavy cream in a small saucepan. Heat over medium low heat, stirring occasionally, until the mixture has formed a skin and starts to gently bubble. Turn heat down to low and gently mix in the lemon juice. Continue to gently mix for one minute as the curds separate from the whey and then remove from heat.

Ladle the mixture into the cheesecloth lined colander and let drain for 5-8 minutes. Spoon ricotta into serving dish and mix in a pinch of salt.

Remove roasted eggplant from oven and plate onto serving dish. Serve immediately with fresh ricotta.