Cheesy Pesto Eggplant Slice

**Type:** Main  **Serves:** 30 tastes  **Recipe source:** Adapted from Stephanie Alexander Foundation

**Cooks Note:** Marrow, zucchini and pumpkin slices can be used instead of eggplant in this recipe. If there is a large harvest of eggplant, this recipe can be made up with double portions of eggplant by adding a second eggplant round on top.

### EQUIPMENT:
- chopping board
- 1 large knife
- 2 clean tea towels
- grater
- bowls – 1 medium, 3 small
- pastry brush
- large plastic tray
- 2 chargrill pans
- tongs
- paper towels
- 2 large baking dishes
- spoon
- oven mitts
- food processor
- garlic press

### INGREDIENTS:
- 500 g mozzarella
- ½ cup fresh basil leaves
- handful fresh oregano sprigs
- 4–5 eggplants
- 2–3 tablespoons olive oil, plus more to oil the chargrill pans
- 1/2 cup basil pesto
- 1 large can whole peeled tomatoes (or 2 x 400g tins)
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 2–3 sprigs oregano
- fresh basil leaves, to garnish
- extra virgin olive oil, to serve
- salt and pepper, to taste

### What to do:
1. Use the large knife to cut the eggplant into slices, creating consistent 1 cm thick rounds.
2. Measure the olive oil into a small bowl and using the pastry brush, brush each side of the eggplant slices with olive oil.
3. Put the two chargrill pans on high heat and pour a small amount of oil into each pan.
4. When the oil is hot, carefully use tongs to place the eggplant slices on the chargrill pans. Cook each eggplant slice until golden brown marks appear. Then turn the slices over and cook until golden brown marks appear on the other side too.
5. Remove the cooked eggplant slices and place them on paper towels on a tray to drain.
6. Grate the mozzarella, place it in the medium-sized bowl and set aside
7. Wash the oregano and basil, then dry them with a clean tea towel.
8. Strip the oregano and basil leaves from the stems and discard the stems. Tear up the basil into small pieces, put all the leaves into food processor bowl. Crush garlic into food processor bowl.
9. Combine tinned tomatoes, garlic and 1/3 cup olive oil in a food processor. Whiz until a sauce forms. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
10. Grease baking dishes lightly with oil and pour half tomato sauce into the 2 dishes spreading over the base.
11. Once all the eggplant slices are cooked and have drained, place them on top of the tomato sauce in a layer, spread the pesto sauce on top of the mozzarella and put the mozzarella on top.
12. You can create an extra layer if there is more eggplant by repeating steps. (sauce eggplant pesto cheese).
13. Place the baking trays with the eggplant into the oven. Cook for 10 minutes or until the cheese has melted.