

# A HISTORY OF THE WORLD IN TEN DINNERS

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FOREWORD BY JESSICA B. HARRIS

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NEW YORK



# Stuffed Eggplant

## BHARVE BAINGAN

**SERVES 4 TO 6** *Historically, eggplant is part of that interesting group of foods, including potatoes and tomatoes, that are today considered staples but were once thought to be poisonous in the West. In Italy, they were believed to cause insanity. This is a delicious dish that can be served whole or sliced as an appetizer. I have found that the best eggplant-to-stuffing ratio is obtained with smaller or narrower varieties like Japanese or Thai eggplant. A neat trick for coring Japanese eggplant is to use a power drill with a large bit, or just the bit itself. I have a bit in my kit just for this purpose.*

2 Japanese or 8 Thai eggplants  
¼ cup unsweetened flaked coconut  
¼ cup cooked chickpeas  
¼ cup breadcrumbs  
1 tablespoon peeled and minced fresh ginger  
1 medium yellow onion, roughly chopped  
6 fresh curry leaves, minced (available at most Indian markets)  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro

1 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
2 teaspoons ground fenugreek  
1 tablespoon sesame seeds  
1 teaspoon sugar (raw sugar or jaggery is best)  
2½ teaspoons kosher salt  
4 tablespoons unsalted butter  
Oil or ghee for frying

**CUT** off the tops of the eggplants and reserve them. Hollow out the bodies of the eggplants and set aside. Grind the flesh removed from the eggplants and the remaining ingredients except the butter and oil for frying in a mortar and pestle or pulse them in a food processor fitted with the metal blade, scraping down the sides a couple of times. Do not grind into a paste—you want some texture, especially from the coconut and onion. Melt

the butter in a skillet over medium heat and cook this mixture, stirring occasionally, until fragrant and well combined. Stuff the mixture into the eggplants. For Japanese eggplants it is easier to use a piping bag.

**REPLACE** the tops of the eggplants and fix them in place with toothpicks. Fry the eggplants in several inches of oil or ghee until soft, then drain briefly.