AUBERGINE PARMIGIANA

Serves six

Ingredients

- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1/2 tsp dried mixed herbs
- 2 x 400g tins of chopped tomatoes
- 1 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1/2 tsp sugar (or more, to taste)
- 1-2 sprigs fresh oregano (or 1/2 tsp dried)
- Small handful chopped fresh basil (plus extra, to garnish)
- 1 tin lentils, drained
- 3 medium aubergines
- 2 cups grated mozzarella (or use cheddar)
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan (or hard cheese of your preference)
- Fresh avocado, to serve
- 100g crumbled feta, to serve
- Extra fresh baby basil leaves, to serve
- (Serve with a fresh green salad on the side if you like)
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Cooking method:

1. To a medium-sized pot over medium heat, add a little olive oil and fry the garlic and dried herbs for 1-2 minutes until fragrant; add in the tomatoes, balsamic vinegar, sugar and chopped fresh basil and oregano and leave to simmer for 20-30 minutes until reduced by about one third. Taste and season accordingly.

*(Add in about 1/4 cup dried lentils along with the tomatoes if you'd like. If you'd prefer using canned, they can be added later)

2. Meanwhile, slice the aubergines length ways into 1cm slices (or just slightly thinner).

3. Add the remaining olive oil to a good quality non-stick frying pan over medium-high heat, and cook the aubergines in batches until golden and almost slightly charred, adding more oil if you need to. Set aside to drain on kitchen paper and season lightly.

4. Preheat the oven to 180C. Add a thin layer of tomato sauce to a medium-sized baking dish; follow with a layer of aubergines and then a scattering of grated mozzarella and a scattering of parmesan. Repeat again, and then finish off with a final layer of tomato sauce and a final layer of cheese.

5. Bake for about 30 minutes, or until bubbling and golden, remove from the oven and allow to cool slightly. Sprinkle with a little torn basil before serving with slices of avocado and a scattering of feta as soon as possible.