Eggplant Pickle

**Season:** summer/autumn  **Serving:** enough for 24 students as a garnish  **Type:** preserves

**Fresh from the garden:** eggplants, garlic, ginger, onion  **Difficulty:** intermediate/expert

**Recipe Source:** Collingwood College, Victoria

There are probably thousands of recipes for eggplant, ranging from dips to fritters and croquettes, salads, pickles and relishes, curries, pasta sauces and main dishes. There are also many different members of the eggplant family. This much-loved ingredient is central to the cuisines of the Arab world, to South-East Asia, all the countries surrounding the Mediterranean, and beyond.

The biggest sin is under-cooking eggplant. It must be soft and creamy, never squeaky on the teeth. And are all eggplant purple? Are they all the same shape? You could cook a different eggplant recipe every day of the year and still have plenty more to try! This particular recipe is not intended as a long-keeping pickle. Use it within a few days.

**What to do:**

1. Wash the eggplants and peel the garlic and ginger.
2. Dampen a tea towel and place it under the chopping board to keep it from slipping.
3. Chop the eggplant into very small pieces and drop into the medium bowl. Sprinkle with the salt and set aside.
4. Chop the onion, garlic and ginger finely.
5. Grind the mustard seeds with the mortar and pestle. Set aside.
6. Heat the dry frying pan over moderate heat and separately toast the coriander and cumin seeds until fragrant. Set each of the toasted spices aside in their own saucer or bowl.
7. Transfer the toasted seeds to the mortar and pestle and grind to a coarse powder. Mix with the mustard seed.

**EQUIPMENT:**
- chopping board
- 1 large knife
- 2 clean tea towels
- 1 medium bowl
- mortar and pestle
- deep frying pan
- 3 saucers or bowls
- wooden spoons
- small serving bowl for each table

**INGREDIENTS:**
- 2 eggplants
- 4 cloves of garlic
- small knob fresh ginger
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 onion
- 1 tablespoon black mustard seeds
- 1 tablespoon coriander seeds
- 2 tablespoons cumin seeds
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- ½ cup hot water
- ½ cup vinegar
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 cinnamon stick
- chilli (optional)
8. Put the pan back on moderate heat and pour in the vegetable oil.
9. When you can hear the oil hissing, carefully add the onion, garlic, ginger, coriander, cumin and mustard seeds. Fry for 2–3 minutes, stirring with the wooden spoon.
10. Quickly rinse the eggplant and pat dry in a tea towel.
11. Add the eggplant to the frying pan, and fry slowly until golden brown.
12. Add the water, vinegar, sugar and cinnamon stick and cook on low for 10–15 minutes. If using chilli, wash, split the chili and seed it, then chop and add it to the pan. Wear disposable gloves.
13. Check for seasoning and add more salt if needed.
14. Decant the eggplant pickle into serving bowls for each table.