



## INGREDIENTS

**1 onion**, peeled and finely chopped  
**1 celery stalk**, finely chopped  
**2 garlic cloves**, peeled and crushed  
**1 tablespoon rapeseed oil**  
**400g tinned chopped tomatoes**  
**2 fresh tomatoes**, cut into eight  
**1 large handful chopped base herbs**  
(rosemary, thyme and/or oregano)  
**1 small pinch sugar**  
**1/2 capful cider vinegar**  
**1 teaspoon vegetable bouillon or stock**  
Pinch Maldon Sea salt  
Freshly ground black pepper  
**2 aubergines**, sliced thinly on the diagonal  
**2 courgettes**, sliced thinly on the diagonal  
**6 large slices of ham**  
**100g finely grated mixed cheese** (any of these – cheddar, Parmesan, Gruyere or mozzarella)  
Handful fresh basil leaves

## LET'S GET COOKING

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180/350/gas 4.
- 2** Line 2 baking sheets with baking paper and place the sliced aubergines on one and the sliced courgettes on the other. Drizzle with oil and season with salt and pepper. Place in the oven and cook for 30 minutes or until they start to brown, turning midway through.
- 3** Meanwhile, make the sauce. Place the oil in a large saucepan and sauté the onions and celery over a medium heat for 10 minutes. Add the garlic and stir for another 3 minutes. Add the tinned tomatoes, fresh tomatoes, sugar, vinegar, chopped herbs and bouillon or stock. Stir well and season with salt and pepper.
- 4** Bring to a boil and turn down to a simmer. Place a lid on the tomatoes and either pop in the oven or cook on the hob for 30 minutes.
- 5** When the vegetables and tomatoes are cooked assemble the ingredients in an ovenproof dish. Start with a layer of tomato sauce, then aubergines, a slice of ham followed by a scattering of cheese. Repeat the next layer with courgettes instead of aubergine. Finish the melanzane with tomato sauce, grated cheese and finally tear over the basil.
- 6** Place in the oven and cook for 30 minutes.

*"This dish reminds me of my summers spent cooking in the north of Corfu. In the afternoons I used to head down from the olive groves to Avlaki beach to swim. Every now and again I'd treat myself to a melanzane from my favourite taverna. Layers of deep tomatoes, caramelised aubergines, freshly picked courgettes and salty ham topped with local cheese and summer herbs. Here's my version of the recipe which encapsulates the turquoise sea and hot steamy breeze. Utter heaven."*

## MELANZANE



MINUTES TO PREPARE  
20



TIME TO COOK  
1 hour



SERVES  
4