



## Ingredients

Serves 4

- 4 aubergines, each weighing about 275g
- 6 tbsp olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 large red pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1½ tsp freshly ground cumin seeds
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp freshly grated nutmeg
- 1 tsp *pimentón dulce* (smoked sweet Spanish paprika)
- A large pinch of crushed dried chillies
- 500g minced lamb
- 6 tbsp tomato sauce
- 100g Manchego cheese, coarsely grated
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

## Rick Stein's Spain

### ***Lamb-stuffed aubergines with moorish spices and manchego cheese***

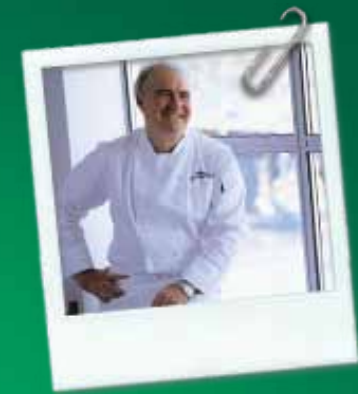
#### *Berenjenas rellenas*

I must say I took a bit of poetic licence with my stuffed aubergines. That's not to say the people of La Mancha don't stuff them, because they do, but I oiled and salted halved aubergines and baked them in the oven until tender, then made a ragu with minced lamb, red pepper, cumin, cinnamon and nutmeg and mixed that with the scooped-out aubergine flesh, filled the cases and sprinkled them with Manchego cheese before baking again. I have to say they are flying out of the door at our deli.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/gas 6. Cut each aubergine lengthways through the stalk, then score the flesh in a tight criss-cross pattern, taking the knife through the flesh down to the skin, but taking care not to cut through the skin. Place them side by side on a baking tray and drizzle each half with 1½ teaspoons of the oil, season with salt and bake for about 30 minutes or until the flesh is soft and tender but not browned.

Meanwhile, heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil in a large non-stick frying pan. Add the onion, garlic, red pepper and spices and fry gently for 10 minutes. Add the minced lamb and fry for 3–4 minutes or until all the meat is lightly browned. Stir in the tomato sauce and leave to simmer for 5 minutes.

Remove the aubergines from the oven and increase the temperature to 220°C/gas 7. Using a dessertspoon, carefully scoop most of the flesh out of the baked aubergine halves, leaving the skins with a layer of flesh about 1cm thick. Stir the flesh into the lamb mixture with ½ teaspoon of salt and some pepper to taste. Spoon the mixture into each aubergine shell and sprinkle with the grated cheese. Bake for 9–10 minutes until golden brown.



### **Rick Stein's Spain by Rick Stein**

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