

## **Tomatoes with Crisp Fried Eggplant and Burrata**

- All-purpose flour, for dredging
- 3 large eggs, well beaten
- 2 cups fresh breadcrumbs
- 4 Japanese eggplants (1 to 1 1/4 pounds total), cut on the bias into 1/2-inch-thick slices
- 12 ounces cherry tomatoes, preferably in a mix of colors
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 cup fresh basil leaves, half of them torn
- Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper
- Vegetable oil, for frying
- 1 ball (about 7 ounces) burrata cheese

Place flour, eggs, and breadcrumbs in 3 separate wide, shallow bowls. Working with 1 eggplant slice at a time: dredge in flour, dip in egg, and then dredge in breadcrumbs. Transfer to a wire rack set in a rimmed baking sheet and refrigerate 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, halve tomatoes and toss with olive oil and torn basil. Season the mixture with salt and pepper.

Heat about 1/4 inch of vegetable oil in a large skillet, over medium-high heat, until shimmering. Add enough eggplant slices to fill, but not crowd, skillet and fry, flipping once, until deep golden brown and crunchy; 1 to 2 minutes on each side (lower heat slightly, if necessary).

Remove eggplant slices with a slotted spoon, drain on a clean wire rack set in a rimmed baking sheet, and season with salt. Discard used oil and repeat process with fresh oil and remaining eggplant.

Arrange eggplant and tomato mixture on a platter. Cut burrata in half, place next to tomatoes, and season with salt and pepper. Scatter remaining basil on top and serve.