

# Eggplant (Brinjal) nutrition facts

Eggplant or **Brinjal**, is a very low calorie vegetable and has healthy nutrition profile; good news for weight watchers! The veggie is popularly known as **aubergine** in the western world.

Botanically, it belongs to *solanaceae* family and named as *Solanum melongena*. This perennial plant is native to Indian subcontinent and now grown in many tropical and semitropical regions.

Different varieties aubergine grown all around the world. Depending on the cultivar type they vary greatly in size, shape and color. Generally, these veggies falls into two broad categories, either oval shaped or thin and elongated.

The plant reaches about 3-4 feet tall in quick time and bears many bright fruits. Each fruit has smooth, glossy skin. Internally, it features off-white color pulp with numerous centrally arranged small, soft seeds. Fruits are generally harvested when they reach maturity but short of full stage ripeness.

## Health benefits of Eggplant (aubergine)

- Eggplant is very low in calories and fats but rich in soluble fiber content. 100 g provides just 24 calories but contributes about 9% of RDA of fiber.
- Research studies at the Institute of Biology of *São Paulo State University*, Brazil showed that eggplant is effective in the treatment of high blood cholesterol.
- It contains good amounts of many essential B-complex groups of vitamins such as pantothenic acid (vitamin B5), pyridoxine (vitamin B6) and thiamin (vitamin B1), niacin (B3). These vitamins are essential in the sense that body requires them from external sources to replenish and required for fat, protein and carbohydrates metabolism.
- It is also good source of minerals like manganese, copper, iron and potassium. Manganese is used as a co-factor for the antioxidant enzyme *superoxide dismutase*. Potassium is an important intracellular electrolyte helps counter the hypertension effects of sodium.
- The peel or skin (deep blue variety) of aubergine has significant amounts of phenolic flavonoid phyto-chemicals called **anthocyanins**. Scientific studies have shown that these anti-oxidants have potential health effects against cancer, aging, inflammation and neurological diseases.

See the table below for in depth analysis of nutrients:

Aubergine (Brinjal), (*Solanum melongena*), raw, Nutritive value per 100 g  
(Source: USDA National Nutrient data base)

Principle	Nutrient Value	Percentage of RDA
Energy	24 Kcal	1%
Carbohydrates	5.7 g	4%
Protein	1 g	2%
Total Fat	0.19 g	1%
Cholesterol	0 mg	0%
Dietary Fiber	3.40 g	9%
<b>Vitamins</b>		
Folates	22 mcg	5.5%
Niacin	0.649 mg	4%
Pantothenic acid	0.281 mg	6%
Pyridoxine	0.084 mg	6.5%
Riboflavin	0.037 mg	3%
Thiamin	0.039 mg	3%
Vitamin A	27 IU	1%
Vitamin C	2.2 mg	3.5%
Vitamin E	0.30 mg	2%
Vitamin K	3.5 mcg	3%
<b>Electrolytes</b>		
Sodium	2 mg	0%
Potassium	230 mg	5%
<b>Minerals</b>		
Calcium	9 mg	1%
Copper	0.082 mg	9%
Iron	0.24 mg	3%
Magnesium	14 mg	3.5%
Manganese	0.250 mg	11%
Zinc	0.16 mg	1%

## Selection and storage

Eggplants are available afresh all around the season. In the store, many varieties of eggplants differing in size, shape and color are put for sale.

Buy healthy looking, firm, bright colored fruits that feel heavy and solid.. Take a close look at the stalk; if it is stout, firm and green which means the fruit is fresh.

Avoid those with wrinkled skin, soft in hand and with any surface cuts or bruise. Old, soft eggpalnts taste bitter.

At home, they can be kept in cool place for a day or two but ideally placed in the refrigerator; where the keep fresh for few days.

## Preparation and serving methods

Wash eggplant thoroughly in cold water before use. Trim the stalk end with sharp knife. Whole fruit including its skin is edible.

Here are some serving tips:

- Spicy aubergine slices are favorite as side dish.
- Brinjals, as they popularly known in South-Asian region, feature mainly in many kinds of Indian cuisines. It can be stew fried, roasted, baked or ground (*baingan bartha*, *baingan chutney*) in the preparation of variety of recipes.
- In Southern India, it is chopped into cubes and used in curry, chutney, and with rice (*brinjal pulao*).
- Stewed Asparagus spears sandwiched with aubergine slice is a popular recipe in Mediterranean region.
- The veggie is also widely used in pickling.

## Safety profile

Eggplant (aubergine) contains very small amount of nicotine than any other edible plant with a concentration of 0.01mg/100g. However, the amount of nicotine from eggplant or any other food is negligible and therefore shall not warrant against its usage. So, enjoy! (Medical disclaimer)

