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Gaji Namool (Sautéed Eggplant)

Makes 5 or 6 servings

Outdoor markets in Seoul are filled with beautiful purple eggplants when they are in season in late summer. Much smaller than the European varieties, Korean eggplants are similar to their Japanese cousins. The traditional way to make this *banchan* (side dish) is to boil the eggplants first and then shred or cut them, but I've found a method that is much simpler. If you don't like spicy food, you may omit the chile powder, but compared to some other Korean dishes, the heat is barely noticeable.

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 medium eggplants, cut into 1/2-inch-thick strips, 2 to 3 inches long
- 1 tablespoon Asian sesame oil
- 1 green onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon Korean chile powder
- 1 teaspoon toasted sesame seeds, crushed

Heat the vegetable oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the garlic and eggplants and stir-fry until the eggplants are limp and starting to brown, 6 to 8 minutes. Add the sesame oil, green onion, soy sauce, and chile powder and stir-fry for another minute or so. Remove from the heat.

Sprinkle with sesame seeds and serve either warm or at room temperature.