

Mousakas

Ingredients (Vegetables):

3 potatoes, large (boiled and peeled)
5-6 tablespoons olive oil
1 onion
2 zucchini, medium
2 eggplants, small or 1 large
thyme
salt & pepper

Ingredients (Ground Meat):

1 onion
2 tablespoons olive oil, for sautéing
1 clove of garlic
3 pinches of salt
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 levelled teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 tablespoon tomato paste
500 g ground beef
400 g canned chopped tomatoes
salt
pepper
For béchamel sauce
100 butter
100 g all-purpose flour
750 ml milk 3.5% fat
freshly ground pepper
pinch of ground nutmeg
100 g parmesan cheese, grated
3 egg yolks

Method

Preheat oven to 200° C (390° F) Fan.

For the vegetables

- Place a pan over high heat.
- Slice the potatoes into 1 cm rounds. Add to the pan along with 2-3 tablespoons olive oil, until golden on both sides. (It doesn't matter if they break.)
- lightly brush a 25x30 cm baking pan with olive oil. Add the potatoes in one layer. Sprinkle with thyme, salt and pepper.
- thinly slice the onion and add it to the same pan along with some olive oil. Sauté until it caramelizes and place over potatoes in baking pan.
- Slice the zucchini into rounds and add them to the same pan along with some olive oil. Sauté until golden and spread them in a layer over the potatoes (2nd layer). Sprinkle with thyme, salt and pepper.
- Slice the eggplants into rounds and add them to the same pan along with some olive oil. Sauté until golden and spread them in a layer over the potatoes (3rd layer). Sprinkle with thyme, salt and pepper.

For the ground meat

- Place the same pan used for the vegetables over high heat. Add some olive oil.
- coarsely chop the onion and add to the pan. Mince the garlic and add to the pan.
- Add the sugar, nutmeg, cinnamon and tomato paste. Scrape the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon to mix the tomato paste as well as possible. This will give it a nice colour and remove its bitter taste.
- add the ground meat to the hot pan and mix thoroughly until it caramelizes and turns golden.
- Add the chopped tomatoes. Mix and allow mixture to thicken over low heat for 10-15 minutes. Mix often.
- Before removing from heat, season with salt and pepper.

For the béchamel sauce

- Place a saucepan over low heat.
- Add the butter. As soon as it melts, add the flour and whisk.
- Add the milk in small batches. It is very important to add the milk in small batches and wait for each batch to get completely incorporated before adding the next, while whisking continuously so that the mixture doesn't form lumps. Repeat the same process until all of the milk has been added.
- As soon as the béchamel sauce starts to bubble, it is ready. It should be smooth and creamy.
- Remove from heat and add freshly ground pepper, ground nutmeg, some grated parmesan and the egg yolks. Mix thoroughly.

To assemble

- Add 200 g of the béchamel sauce to the ground meat mixture. This will ensure that all of the ingredients for the moussaka stick together nicely.
- Season to taste.
- spread the ground meat mixture over the vegetables in the baking pan (4th layer).
- Last, add the béchamel sauce, making sure to spread it evenly over the other layers all the way to the edges of the baking pan. Sprinkle with parmesan.
- Bake for 35-40 minutes, until golden.
- when ready, remove from oven and allow it to cool for 1 hour.
- Cut into pieces and serve.

