

Greek Moussaka

Swick

Serves 1 | Active Time: 1 hour 35 minutes | Total Time: 2 hours 45 minutes

Chef's Notes

- For added flavor, you can cook the roux for about 5 minutes or so until it turns a blond color. This will give the béchamel sauce a delicious, nutty flavor.

Served with a Greek salad, this moussaka makes a very tasty meal.

Making the Meat Sauce

To make the meat sauce, first prepare your mise en place. Dice the onion and mince the garlic. Measure the spices and tomato paste, and have the beef and tomatoes on hand.

Heat a large Dutch oven over medium-low heat. Add the olive oil and gently cook the onions until translucent and start to turn golden, about 8-10 minutes. Add the minced garlic and cook for an additional minute before adding the ground beef. Increase heat to medium-high, add the cinnamon stick, oregano, allspice, nutmeg, ground cloves, sea salt and pepper and cook until the beef is done. Add the tomato paste and cook for a minute or so before adding the tomatoes. Crush them up a bit, and then add the bay leaf. Bring to just a boil and reduce the heat to low. Simmer for approximately 45 minutes to an hour. Adjust seasonings to taste.

Step 1: Making the Meat Sauce

- 1 large onion
- 5 cloves garlic
- 1 whole cinnamon stick
- 1 1/2 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp allspice
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp freshly ground cloves
- 1 tsp sea salt
- 1/2 tsp ground pepper
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 lb lean ground beef (or lamb)
- 1 - 15 oz can whole tomatoes
- 2 tbsp olive oil

Roasting the Eggplant

To prepare the eggplant, first preheat your oven to 450° degrees Fahrenheit. Wash and slice the eggplant into 1/2" -inch rounds. Place onto a cooling rack and sprinkle both sides with the salt. Let sit for 20 minutes.

Rinse the eggplant under cold water and dry well with paper towels. Lay the eggplant onto two baking sheets. Coat each piece of eggplant with olive oil and sprinkle with sea salt. Roast for approximately 25 minutes, flipping half way through.

To finish, turn on the broiler and broil for an additional 4 to 5 minutes per side to brown. Remove from oven and set aside on cooling rack. Reduce the oven to 350° degrees Fahrenheit.

Step 2: Roasting the Eggplant

- 3 lb eggplant
- 6 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp sea salt
- 1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper

Making the Béchamel Sauce

To make the béchamel sauce, melt the butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add the flour and whisk to form a smooth paste.* Add the nutmeg and salt. Slowly add the milk, while whisking continuously. Cook until the mixture boils, whisking continuously until it thickens, for another 2 to 4 minutes.

Remove from the heat and transfer to an ice bath to cool. Once cooled, whisk in the egg and yolks to form a smooth custard. Set aside.

Step 3: Making the Béchamel Sauce

- 6 tbsp unsalted butter
- 6 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 3 cups whole milk
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg
- 1 tsp sea salt
- 1 large egg
- 2 large egg yolks

Assembling and Baking

To assemble the moussaka, oil a 9" × 13" -inch baking dish with the extra-virgin olive oil. Sprinkle the base with breadcrumbs and fan the eggplant to form a single layer. Next, remove the cinnamon stick from the meat sauce and then spoon half of the sauce on top of the eggplant and smooth out with an offset spatula. Place another layer of eggplant and then top with the rest of the meat sauce.

Pour the béchamel sauce over the entire surface and smooth out. Top with grated parmesan cheese. Bake for 45 minutes or until golden brown (you can turn on the broiler for the last few minutes to brown more). Let rest on a cooling rack for about 10 minutes before slicing and serving.

Step 4: Assembling and Baking

- 2 tsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup fine bread crumbs
- 1/4 cup parmesan cheese