

GREEK MOUSSAKA

PAIRED WITH 2018 SYRAH SLIDE MOUNTAIN | YIELDS 6 SERVINGS

MOUSSAKA INGREDIENTS

3 Eggplants, sliced ½ inch
 6 Yukon Gold Potatoes, sliced ½ inch
 ¾ cup Olive Oil, divided
 1 lb ground Beef
 ½ lb ground Lamb
 1 cup Red Onions, diced
 2 Cloves of Garlic, minced
 1 can Tomatoes, petite diced
 2 tbsp Tomato Paste
 1 tsp granulated Sugar
 1 cup Red Wine
 1 Bay Leaf
 ½ tsp ground Cinnamon or one Cinnamon Stick
 Kosher Salt and Black Pepper as needed

BECHAMEL INGREDIENTS

4 tbsp Butter
 6 tbsp Flour
 3 cups Milk
 ¼ tsp ground Nutmeg
 2 Egg Yolks
 ¾ cup Parmigiano-Reggiano
 1 pinch White Pepper
 To taste Kosher Salt

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Remove the ends from the eggplants and cut them into slices, ½ inch thick. Season with salt and place in a colander for about half an hour to drain.
2. Rinse the eggplant slices with cold water and pat dry with paper towel, to get rid of the excessive water.
3. Drizzle the eggplant with up to 4 oz of olive oil and season with freshly ground pepper.
4. Bake the eggplant for 20 minutes or until soft and golden brown. Set aside when done.
5. Prepare the potatoes by slicing them ½ inch thick, drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Lay the slices out on a sheet tray and cook them in the oven until golden brown and tender. Set them aside when done.
6. Prepare the meat sauce for the moussaka by heating a large pan to medium-high heat and adding ¼ cup of olive oil.
7. Add the chopped onions and sauté, until softened and slightly colored. Stir in the ground beef and lamb (add salt) and break it up with a wooden spoon as it cooks. When the meat is browned, add the garlic and tomato paste and sauté until the garlic starts to soften.
8. Pour in the red wine to deglaze the meat juices and wait for it to reduce / evaporate.
9. Add the tomatoes, sugar, a pinch of cinnamon, bay leaf and a pinch of salt and pepper.
10. Bring to the boil then turn the heat down and simmer with the lid on for about 30 minutes or until most of the juices have evaporated. Set aside when done.
11. Make the béchamel sauce for the moussaka by using a saucepan to melt the butter over medium heat.
12. Add the flour whisking continuously to make a paste.
13. Add the milk in a slow steady stream; keep whisking in order to prevent lumps. If the sauce still needs to thicken, boil over low heat while continuing to stir. Its consistency should resemble a thick cream.
14. Remove the béchamel pan from the stove and stir in the egg yolks, salt, pepper, a pinch of nutmeg and the grated cheese. Taste and adjust seasoning. Set the béchamel sauce aside.
15. Adjust the oven to 325°F. To assemble the moussaka, use a large baking dish (9x13 pan works well). Butter the bottom and sides of the pan and layer the potatoes first, then half the eggplant slices. Pour in all of the meat sauce and spread it out evenly. Add a second layer of eggplants, top with all of the béchamel sauce and smooth out with a spatula.
16. Bake your moussaka for about 60 minutes or until its crust turns light golden brown. Increase oven temperature to broil and brown the top of the moussaka. Be careful not to burn it.
17. Wait for the moussaka to cool down somewhat before cutting it into pieces. This will prevent the béchamel sauce from sliding off when you're cutting your pieces. Serve!