

The Classic Greek Moussaka Recipe

Ingredients:

2-3 large eggplants (aubergines)
500g minced meat (lamb or beef)
2 onions, finely chopped
2-3 cloves of garlic, minced
400g canned tomatoes or tomato sauce
1/2 cup red wine (optional)
1 tsp cinnamon
1 tsp ground allspice
Salt and pepper to taste
Olive oil for frying
4-5 potatoes, peeled and sliced (optional)

For the béchamel sauce:

4 cups milk
4 tbsp butter
4 tbsp all-purpose flour
A pinch of nutmeg
Salt and pepper to taste
2 eggs, beaten

Instructions:

Begin by preparing the eggplants. Slice them into rounds, sprinkle with salt, and let them sit for about 30 minutes to remove excess moisture. Rinse and pat dry.

Heat olive oil in a pan and fry the eggplant slices until they turn golden brown. Set them aside on paper towels to drain.

In the same pan, add more olive oil if needed and sauté the onions and garlic until they become translucent.

Add the minced meat and cook until browned. Break it into small pieces as it cooks.

Stir in the canned tomatoes or tomato sauce, red wine (if using), cinnamon, allspice, salt, and pepper. Simmer for about 20 minutes until the sauce thickens.

If you're using potatoes, fry the potato slices until they're slightly golden.

Preheat your oven to 180°C (350°F).

To make the béchamel sauce, melt butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Stir in the flour and cook for a few minutes until it turns slightly golden.

Gradually add the milk, whisking continuously to avoid lumps. Cook until the sauce thickens.

Season the béchamel sauce with nutmeg, salt, and pepper. Remove it from the heat and let it cool slightly.

Beat the two eggs and fold them into the béchamel sauce.

Assemble the moussaka in a large baking dish. Start with a layer of eggplant slices, followed by the minced meat mixture (and potatoes if you're using them). Repeat the layers until you run out of ingredients, finishing with a layer of eggplant.

Pour the béchamel sauce evenly over the top layer.

Bake in the preheated oven for about 45 minutes to 1 hour, or until the top is golden brown and the moussaka is bubbling.

Allow the moussaka to cool for a few minutes before serving. This dish is often enjoyed warm, not piping hot, to allow the flavors to meld.

Serving and Enjoying

Moussaka is traditionally served as a main course, accompanied by a Greek salad and crusty bread. It's a hearty, comforting dish that's perfect for family gatherings and special occasions. Pair it with a glass of red wine for the ultimate Greek dining experience.