

moussaka with feta and yoghurt serves 8



This moussaka has courgettes as well as aubergines in it; and instead of a heavy béchamel sauce on top, it has a really easy - and far less rich - yoghurt topping. It is perfect for a summer buffet as it will keep well for some time after being removed from the oven; serve warm with a green salad and glass or two of gutsy red.

ingredients

2 large aubergines - 6 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil - 1 large onion, peeled, finely chopped - 2 large garlic cloves, peeled finely chopped - 1 kg / 2 lb 4 oz minced lamb - 150 ml / 5 fl oz red wine - 1 heaped tbsp tomato purée - 15 g / 1/2 oz flat leaf parsley - 300 ml / 10 fl oz lamb stock - 2 heaped tsp freeze-dried oregano - 1 heaped tsp ground cinnamon - salt, freshly milled pepper - 2 large (or 3 medium) courgettes

topping: 2 medium free-range eggs - 500g pot of traditional Greek yoghurt - 55g / 2 oz traditional feta cheese, grated - 85g / 3 oz freshly grated Parmesan cheese and a tiny grating of nutmeg

method

Wipe the aubergine, cut off the ends. Slice it into rounds, about 1/2" (1 cm) each, place in a colander and sprinkle with salt - about 1 tbsp altogether. Leave, uncovered, for about 1 hour.

Meanwhile, heat 1 tbsp of the oil in a very large, heavy-based pan. Cook the onion and garlic gently for about 5 minutes until softened. Increase the heat, add the mince. Brown all over, stirring well.

Once browned, add the wine, increase the heat and bubble until liquid is reduced to about half. Stir in the tomato purée.

Remove the stalks from the parsley and tear in half. Add stalks to the mince. (Reserve leaves for later). Add the stock, oregano, cinnamon and plenty of seasoning, then stir well. Simmer over a medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, for 30 minutes, or until almost all the liquid has evaporated.

Fish out and discard the parsley stalks. Finely chop the leaves and add to the mince, then taste, adding more salt, pepper and cinnamon if necessary. Cool.

Rinse the aubergines and pat thoroughly dry. Heat 2 tbsp oil in a large heavy frying pan and fry half the aubergines for 2 - 3 minutes on each side until golden brown and tender. Drain on kitchen paper, then add another 2 tbsp oil and cook the remaining aubergines.

Wipe the courgettes, cut off their ends, then cut lengthwise into 1 cm / 1/2" slices. Heat the remaining 1 tbsp oil and fry the courgettes for 2 - 3 minutes on each side until golden brown. Remove and drain on kitchen paper.

To assemble, lightly oil a 2.5 litre / 4 1/2 pint gratin-style oven dish. Place the courgette slices over the base, top with half the meat mixture then with half the aubergines. Top with the remaining meat, then remaining aubergines.

For the topping, whisk the egg and yoghurt together, then stir in the feta cheese and half the Parmesan, a little nutmeg and plenty of salt and pepper. Slowly pour this over the dish then sprinkle over the remaining Parmesan cheese.

Bake - uncovered - at 180C / 350F / Gas 4 for about 50 minutes, or until golden brown and crusty. Cool for 10 - 15 minutes before serving.

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