



# I love cooking

easy & delicious recipes

## Greek Moussaka

### Introduction:

Other than Greek salad, moussaka is perhaps the best-known of all the Greek dishes. Using only meat and brinjals is the traditional way, but we like adding a potato layer. You can also add any vegetable you prefer like baby marrows and mushrooms.

Moussaka is actually a *schlepp* to make but it's worth it because it's delicious, hearty and filling and you need serve only a salad with it.

This recipe delivers a huge quantity but it keeps well. So if you make it for a weekend lunch, you may have enough leftovers for dinner a few days ahead, reducing your workload a little!

### Ingredients

- 1.25 litres prepared thick Béchamel Sauce ([Click here for recipe](#))
- 1.6 kg (about 5) brinjals (aka eggplant or aubergine)
- 1 kg floury, large potatoes
- 1 kg minced lamb or beef (or a combination of both)
- 2 large onions, finely chopped
- 2 – 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 250 ml dry red wine
- 30 ml dried origanum
- 10 ml ground cinnamon
- 10 ml ground allspice
- 10 ml ground cumin
- 1 x 425 g can chopped tomatoes
- 80 ml tomato paste
- 5 – 10 ml red chili flakes (optional, or to taste)
- 15 ml sugar
- 65 ml parsley, finely chopped
- salt and freshly-milled pepper, to taste
- 250 ml fresh breadcrumbs (grate the bread)
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 375 ml grated Kefalotyri (Greek cheese), cheddar or Parmesan cheese

### Method

First prepare the Béchamel Sauce and cover. Set aside to cool down.

Then prepare the vegetables: using a potato peeler, half-peel the brinjals as follows: peel one strip off from the top to the end of the brinjal, then leave a piece of skin on the brinjal the width of peeled strip so that all the brinjals look like zebras ...

Now slice the brinjals into 1 cm slices. To remove any bitter taste, place the slices in a colander

and salt them lightly. Toss well then place the colander over another bowl to catch the excess moisture that will be drawn out by the salt and let it sit for about 30 minutes.

Meanwhile peel the potatoes and boil them whole until they are just done, no more. Drain, cool and slice them in 1 cm slices then set aside until required.

Rinse the brinjal slices well and dry with paper towels. In a large frying pan, sauté the slices lightly in shallow olive oil on both sides until golden. Drain well, place in a dish lined with kitchen towel and set aside until required.

Now prepare the meat sauce: in a little olive oil, fry the mince lightly until crumbly and light brown then add the onion and sauté until golden. Add the garlic and cook until aromatic, about a minute.

Add the wine and cook rapidly stirring all the time until it has reduced a bit and then add the origanum, cinnamon, allspice, cumin, chopped tomato, tomato paste, chili flakes if using and sugar. Reduce heat and simmer the sauce uncovered for about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally, or until the excess moisture has evaporated. The mixture should not be saucy but rather just moist. Season generously to taste with salt and pepper and add any of the other seasonings if you like – a little more garlic perhaps? A tad more sugar? Cinnamon or cumin? When you're happy with the taste, stir in the parsley and remove the saucepan from the heat.

Butter or grease a large, deep baking pan like an oven roaster or lasagne pan. Sprinkle the bottom of pan with breadcrumbs. Arrange all the potatoes slices onto the crumbs followed by a layer of half of the brinjal slices. Sprinkle a third of the cheese over the vegetables. Spoon all the meat on top, smooth it out and layer the rest of the brinjal slices on top of the meat. Whisk together the cool Béchamel Sauce and eggs and pour over the moussaka. Smooth the Béchamel over to cover the whole pan and sprinkle with the remaining cheese.

Bake in an oven preheated to 180° C for 45 minutes or until the sauce has set, the top is bubbly and golden and the moussaka is cooked through.

Remove from the oven and set aside for 30 minutes to settle a bit before slicing and serving with Greek Salad and garlic bread.

Yields 8 – 10 hearty portions.

### **Chef's hint:**

You can make this dish ahead without pouring over the Béchamel sauce. Cover and chill until required. Just before baking, whisk the eggs into the sauce, pour the mixture over the moussaka and bake. Remember to allow for a few extra minutes of baking to compensate for the cold state in which the moussaka starts off baking!