



Moussaka Open Recipe



Traditional recipe adapted by alex

Description: moussaka is a Greek dish of aubergines and zucchini baked in the oven. This version of the recipe was adapted to improve the nutritional balance of the dish. The amount of meat was reduced and we will steam the aubergines and the zucchini instead of frying them in a pan as traditionally done in Greece. The result is a lighter and yet very tasty version of moussaka.

Season : spring & summertime when vegetables are tasty and not too costly.

Ingredients for 12 people

- * 3 peppers (green, red, yellow)
- * 3 mid-sized onions
- * 3 aubergines
- * 3 zucchini
- * 3 potatoes
- * 1 teaspoonful of cinnamon
- * 500 g of minced meat
- * 3 cloves of garlic
- * 6 red tomatoes
- * 1 kg of tomato purée
- * 1 teaspoonful of brown sugar
- * 90 g of salted butter
- * 110 g of flour
- * 90 cl of semi-skimmed milk
- * 400 g of grated Gruyère cheese



Main ingredients

A few comments before you start

As you will soon see for yourself, the execution of this recipe demands time and effort. And because the preparation of a moussaka dish is fairly intensive (80% of the overall effort), it is a good idea to make a larger quantity and to keep the excess in your freezer. Moreover, the taste of a moussaka dish is very dependent upon the quality and taste of the vegetables you will use to make it. Therefore it may be a good idea to try it during the season of aubergines and zucchini. In fact, it is a complete meal in itself and if you want to have an hors d'oeuvre before the main course, it is advisable to keep it light.

Now, the recipe itself is in fact three recipes: it is a recipe for the moussaka dish that includes a recipe for a red sauce that is delicious with pasta and a recipe of béchamel sauce. One little note of caution for your béchamel sauce: this version is denser than usual, so if you want to have a more fluid béchamel, simply reduce the amount of flour to 90g.

To manage your efforts, it is useful to point out that nothing in the world compels you to execute all of the steps on the same day. This recipe was written in a way that lets you break down your work into two or more chunks: you can make the sauce on one day, steam the vegetables the next and only cook your moussaka on the third day. I personally like to make the red sauce one day and the rest of the steps another day (I don't think it is a great idea to keep steamed vegetables in the fridge for even just one night, but it is possible and does not affect taste too much). The other reason why I like cooking this dish in two rounds is that I usually serve it the day after it was cooked because the taste improves when the dish is left alone for one night.

Patience is your best asset when preparing the red sauce. It is important to do things step by step and to give it the time it needs. A good red sauce has to simmer for the tastes of all of its ingredients to mix well. And of course, it needs your help: don't forget to give it a good stir on a regular basis and make sure the fire is gentle.

Finally, the béchamel sauce needs to be prepared with great care. You have to be there and monitor it all the time because it turns dense very suddenly and then it needs a kind and continual stir. And of course, the last thing you want for a béchamel sauce is to see it boil, so keep the fire very gentle and keep your eyes, nose and ears open. I sometimes think that béchamel is such a serious matter that it should actually be included in the very first version of the pan-galactic constitution of fifty gazillion pages that will undoubtedly be written some day by an ambitious politician.



Above all, enjoy yourself while cooking the moussaka. Each step has its own challenges and demands your attention. Making a dish is a "flow experience" for me and it can be for you too. Its taste will only be better. As is true about many things in your universe, the quality of the result is essentially dependent upon how unconditionally one puts their heart into walking the path and not so much on the technique itself. And it is not dependent on how stubbornly the intensity, quality, beauty and harmony of each step of the way were sacrificed under the pretense that the only thing that matters is the end result. And don't think too much about this

last bit while cooking. Just cook and be a cook, feeling the universal flux. It feels a bit like solar rays that materialize, in a Magritte-like manner, behind a beautiful tree on a lovely Saturday morning in Belgium.



Your action plan

The instructions for cooking your moussaka dish are in the table below. You can just follow the instructions and forget about the timeline or use the timeline to minimize the total duration of your endeavor, without sacrificing the taste of your dish. It is not always necessary to sacrifice quality on the altar of "Fast", the deity of modern times.

	Duration	1 h	2 h	3 h	4 h	5 h	6 h	7 h	8 h	9 h	
0 Overall preparation	0:30	[Green bar from 0:00 to 0:30]									
0.01 Wash the vegetables	0:30	[Green bar from 0:00 to 0:30]									
1 The red sauce	4:30	[Grey bar from 0:30 to 5:00]									
1-001 Gently cook the minced meat in a pan or pot	0:30	[Green bar from 0:30 to 1:00]									
1-002 Add one teaspoonful of cinnamon	0:15	[Green bar from 0:45 to 1:00]									
1-003 Keep the meat for later	-										
1-004 Peel the onions and cut them into mid-sized pieces	0:30	[Green bar from 1:00 to 1:30]									
1-005 Extract the germ from the cloves of garlic (see picture)	0:10	[Green bar from 1:15 to 1:25]									
1-006 Cut the garlic finely	0:05	[Green bar from 1:20 to 1:25]									
1-007 Brown the onions and the garlic in a large saucepan or stewpot	0:25	[Green bar from 1:25 to 1:50]									
1-008 Add salt, pepper and oregano in the saucepan	0:02	[Green bar from 1:48 to 1:50]									
1-009 Cut the 3 peppers in 1cm x 1cm pieces	0:20	[Green bar from 1:50 to 2:10]									
1-010 Add the pieces of pepper in the saucepan	0:20	[Green bar from 2:10 to 2:30]									
1-011 Cut the tomatoes into pieces	0:10	[Green bar from 2:20 to 2:30]									
1-012 Add the tomatoes in the saucepan	0:15	[Green bar from 2:25 to 2:40]									
1-013 Add 1kg of tomato purée and an equal volume of water in the saucepan	0:05	[Green bar from 2:35 to 2:40]									
1-014 Add one teaspoonful of brown sugar	-										
1-015 Keep cooking gently	0:15	[Green bar from 2:40 to 2:55]									
1-016 Add the meat in the saucepan	0:05	[Green bar from 2:50 to 3:00]									
1-017 Add salt, pepper and oregano in the saucepan if necessary	-										
1-018 Let the sauce simmer and give it a stir on a regular basis	1:00	[Green bar from 3:00 to 4:00]									
1-019 Keep the sauce for the last phase (assembly of your moussaka)	-										
2 Preparation of aubergines, zucchini and potatoes	3:00	[Grey bar from 4:00 to 7:00]									
2-001 Cut the aubergines in slices (0.5 cm thick)	0:20	[Green bar from 4:00 to 4:20]									
2-002 Cut the zucchini in slices (0,5 cm thick)	0:20	[Green bar from 4:20 to 4:40]									
2-003 Let the aubergines and zucchini sweat in very salty water	1:00	[Green bar from 4:40 to 5:40]									
2-004 Give the aubergines and zucchini a rinse	0:10	[Green bar from 5:30 to 5:40]									
2-005 Steam the aubergines and zucchini	0:20	[Green bar from 5:40 to 6:00]									
2-006 Peel the potatoes and cut them in slices (0.25 cm thick)	0:45	[Green bar from 6:00 to 6:45]									
2-007 Steam the potatoes	0:30	[Green bar from 6:45 to 7:15]									
3 Thick Béchamel sauce	0:45	[Grey bar from 7:15 to 8:00]									
3-001 Melt the butter on gentle fire and add the flour - dissolve any lumps	0:10	[Green bar from 7:15 to 7:25]									
3-002 Cook during 2 minutes giving it a continual stir	0:02	[Green bar from 7:25 to 7:27]									
3-003 Remove from fire and gently add lukewarm milk while stirring up	0:05	[Green bar from 7:27 to 7:32]									
3-004 Once the sauce becomes homogeneous gently cook and keep stirring up	0:15	[Green bar from 7:32 to 7:47]									
3-005 Keep the Béchamel sauce for the last phase (assembly)	-										
4 Assembly and baking of the moussaka	1:30	[Grey bar from 8:00 to 9:30]									
4-001 Make a layer with the slices of potatoe in 2 dishes for the oven		[Green bar from 8:00 to 8:15]									
4-002 Add one layer of red sauce		[Green bar from 8:15 to 8:30]									
4-003 Make a layer with the slices of zucchini		[Green bar from 8:30 to 8:45]									
4-004 Add one layer of red sauce		[Green bar from 8:45 to 9:00]									
4-005 Make a layer with the slices of aubergine		[Green bar from 9:00 to 9:15]									
4-006 Add one layer of red sauce	0:15	[Green bar from 9:15 to 9:30]									
4-007 Gently add one layer of béchamel sauce	0:10	[Green bar from 9:20 to 9:30]									
4-008 Strew the surface of the Béchamel with grated Gruyère cheese	0:05	[Green bar from 9:25 to 9:30]									
4-009 Pre-heat the oven at 200°C	0:10	[Green bar from 9:20 to 9:30]									
4-010 Bake the dishes at 200°C for 40min and then at 150°C for another 20 min	1:00	[Green bar from 9:30 to 10:30]									

Et en photos ça donne quoi ce plan d'action ?



Extracting the germ from a clove of garlic



Stewpot with onions and peppers



Assembling the moussaka dish



Pieces of pepper



Cooking the Béchamel



The dish in the oven