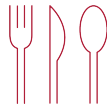




DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM



SERVES: 8

Gourmet Moussaka

Ingredients

Beef Ragù

1 kg stewing beef (preferably shank) cut in thin slices, across the muscle fibres
1 large onion, finely chopped
1 large carrot, finely chopped
1 large celery stalk, finely chopped
100 ml red wine
600 ml beef stock
300 g chopped tomatoes (in a carton)
70 g tomato paste
5 bay leaves
1 cinnamon stick
50 ml Greek virgin olive oil

Eggplant Layers

5 eggplants, sliced thinly
2 tbsp coarse salt
200 ml olive oil for frying

Bechamel

100 g butter
100 g plain flour
1 L hot milk
¼ tsp ground nutmeg
salt, pepper
50 g grated cheddar cheese
2 eggplants

Method

Day 1

Heat the olive oil in a large saucepan. Sauté the carrot, onion, celery, cinnamon stick and bay leaves for 10 minutes on a low heat. Turn up the heat and add the meat. Brown on both sides for 5 minutes and pour in the wine. Simmer for 2 minutes and add the beef stock. Allow to simmer uncovered for 3-4 hours, over a very low heat, checking occasionally in case it needs more liquid. Once the meat can be shredded with a fork, add the chopped tomatoes, tomato paste, salt and pepper. Stir and reduce until all the liquid has evaporated for approx. 30 minutes. Remove the cinnamon stick and bay leaves. Shred the meat with a fork once it has cooled. Slice 5 of the eggplants and put into a colander standing in the sink, sprinkling each layer with a bit of the coarse salt. Leave them for 30 minutes so some of the bitter juice drains from the eggplants. Rinse the eggplants thoroughly and dry with a tea towel.

Fry the eggplants in olive oil in a frying pan in batches until browned on both sides. Remove each batch from the pan when ready and place on a bed of kitchen paper to absorb as much oil as possible overnight.

Day 2

Blacken the 2 remaining eggplants over a naked flame, turning them every couple of minutes to blacken evenly, until the skins split, in order for the flavour to become deliciously smoky. Once cool, peel off the blackened skin (using a knife and kitchen paper or under running tap water). Chop finely. Heat the butter in a saucepan. Add the flour and stir to make a roux. Add the milk gradually, stirring constantly. Once the béchamel has thickened, add salt, pepper and nutmeg and stir. Add most of the grated cheese, stir and then tip in the chopped smoky eggplants. Mix thoroughly.

In a large roasting pan, put a layer of fried eggplants, then a layer of ragù, and repeat until finished. Finally pour the béchamel over the top, sprinkle with grated cheese and a pinch of grated nutmeg and put on the middle rack of a preheated oven on CircoTherm at 180° C. Cook for approx. 50

minutes or until golden brown. Remove from the oven and allow it to rest for at least half an hour before serving.
Traditionally, moussaka is accompanied with Greek feta cheese and a glass of rosé or red wine.

Notes
