

# Moussaka

- 1 pound ground lamb
- 1 teaspoon crushed Aleppo pepper
- 1/2 a finger of fresh ginger, finely minced
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
- kosher salt
- black pepper
- extra virgin olive oil
- 28 ounce can of tomatoes, undrained and chopped fine in a blender
- 1/4 cup fresh currants (optional: dried)
- 6 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 2 medium onions, finely diced
- (optional: white sugar)
- 1 red bell pepper, finely diced
- 1 cup good red wine from Greece, Morocco or the South of Italy
- 1.5 pounds of eggplant
- oil for deep frying
- 1 pound of potatoes
- 8 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup flour, sifted
- 18 ounces milk
- 1 dried bay leaf
- pinch nutmeg
- 1/2 cup Greek-style yogurt
- 3 egg yolks
- 1 cup coarsely grated Parmesan cheese

Leave the lamb unwrapped and spread out on a plate in the fridge for a few hours, to dry it out a bit. If still moist, soak up some moisture with paper towels.

## Red sauce

Combine the lamb with the Aleppo pepper, ginger, cinnamon, allspice, salt and black pepper to taste.

Heat a little oil over a medium-high heat, in the bottom of a large pan. Once the oil is hot, add in the lamb and brown, stirring and breaking up the meat with a fork.

Once the meat is browned drain the meat (to remove the oil) and set aside, and combine with the tomatoes and currants (if you don't have fresh currants, you can reconstitute dried currants by

pouring boiling water over them and letting them sit for 45 minutes or so).

Heat a little oil in the bottom of a pot, over medium-high heat. Once the oil is hot, add in the garlic, followed close on by the onions. Once the onions start to sizzle, you may choose to add a little sugar to speed the caramelization. Follow with the red peppers. Cook, stirring constantly, until the onions are soft and just starting to turn brown.

Add in the red wine, and bring to a boil, stirring. Turn the heat down to medium, and keep cooking for another 15 minutes or so, until the wine is nearly all gone.

Turn the heat back to medium high, and add in the lamb, tomatoes and currants. Keep stirring. Once the sauce starts to boil, reduce the heat to medium-low. Slowly reduce the sauce, stirring occasionally, for 45 minutes or so.

### **Eggplant and Potatoes**

Peel and slice the eggplant into 1/4" thick slices. Lay the eggplant slices out, and sprinkle some salt on each. After 10 minutes or so turn, and salt the other side. After another 10 minutes wash all the salt off.

Heat the oil in a deep fryer to 365 degrees or so. Deep fry the eggplant slices, a few at a time, until tender (about 4 minutes each batch -- make sure that the oil heats back up between batches). Dry on paper towels.

Peel and slice the potatoes into 1/4" thick slices through the thin width of the potato (rather than lengthwise). Deep fry the potato slices, a few at a time, until tender (about 4 minutes each batch - - make sure that the oil heats back up between batches). Dry on paper towels.

### **White Sauce**

Melt the butter over a medium heat. Once the butter is getting warm, but before it starts to brown, add in the flour and start whisking for a couple minutes (until it starts to smell toasty). Whisk in the milk, pouring evenly, until it is absorbed. Add in the bay leaf, and keep whisking slowly until the sauce is thick – about 10-15 minutes. Add nutmeg and salt and pepper to taste, removing the bay leaf. Remove from heat.

In a separate bowl, whisk together the yogurt and the egg yolks. Whisk in just a little of the warm butter-flour-milk gravy. Whisk in just a little more. Repeat, until the yogurt mixture is tempered to close to the same temperature as the butter-flour-milk gravy, and then whisk the yogurt-yolk mixture into the gravy.

### **Putting it all Together**

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.

Get a large baking dish. Cover the bottom of the baking dish with the fried potatoes, and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place eggplant slices over the potatoes, and season with more salt and pepper. Spread the red sauce over, and smooth out. Pour the white sauce on top, and smooth out. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese over the whole thing.

Place in the oven so that the top of the baking pan is close to the middle of the oven. Cook for 40-60 minutes, until browned and bubbling slightly. Remove from the oven, and let cool for half an hour before serving.

Serves: 6-8

Preparation time: 3-5 hours

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