

By HELEN K - DMC

MOUSSAKA

3085 SD

A classic dish that looks great and freezes well – that is, if there's any left!

- A Moussaka is a classic dish that is popular in Greece, the Balkans and the Middle East. Moussaka has many local and regional variations – and this is mine!
- B Serve it hot with a Greek salad - ingredient ideas for which are at the end of this recipe. For *hungry horse* types, you might partner the Moussaka with some potatoes – or warmed pitta bread perhaps. It freezes well [if there's any left!] Once you've made this, you'll never buy a ready-made Moussaka again!

C **DESCRIPTION:**

Moussaka is one of those gorgeous supper dishes which, it must be said, can be daunting – to make, that is, not to eat. After making [Lasagne](#), however, Moussaka will be a breeze – the method is the same, except that instead of pasta, Moussaka has a layer of aubergines.

Freezing:

This Moussaka freezes well. The best way to freeze it is to cut it into portions when cold and lift each portion onto a flat object that fits into your freezer [such as a small chopping board.] A piece of tin foil will work, alternatively. Place the Moussaka portions carefully in the freezer. Leave for a couple of hours. When the Moussaka is firm, you can then transfer it into a freezer bag [or use two ordinary food bags, one inside the other.] [Of course, you COULD put the portions into food containers to freeze - but I'm always short of freezer space!]

1 **METHOD:**

MEAT SAUCE:

Brown the meat in a frying pan. Transfer to a large saucepan.

Add some oil to the same frying pan and brown the onions. Add to the pan.

Briefly fry the garlic. Add to the pan.

Add the remaining Meat Sauce ingredients to the pan. Rinse the tomato tins with about half a tin of water and add the water to the pan.

Stir well.

Simmer for about an hour, stirring occasionally.

AUBERGINE LAYER:

Wash the aubergines and slice them thinly.

Place them in the dishes. Drizzle sunflower [or other] oil over the top layer.

Put the dishes in a hot oven [Gas Mark 7] for about half an hour, until the aubergines are soft.

Swap the two dishes over in the oven after quarter of an hour. At the same time, stir the aubergines around so that they get evenly cooked.

CHEESE SAUCE:

Make a white sauce with the milk, butter and flour.

One easy way to do this is to put all three ingredients in a small saucepan and gently heat the pan.

When the milk begins to rise, whisk constantly until the sauce becomes thick. [Don't panic if it doesn't thicken much – you don't need a thick sauce – and the cheese will thicken it anyway.]

Remove the sauce from the heat.

Grate the cheese and add to the sauce [if you don't have a grater, chop the cheese into small pieces.]

Leave the sauce to stand to let the cheese melt.

When the meat sauce is nearly ready, heat the cheese sauce gently, stirring all the time, to finish melting the cheese. The sauce should be smooth now.

Add the ground nutmeg to the cheese sauce.

2 **BUILDING THE MOUSSAKA:**

Transfer about half of the aubergine slices into a large bowl, leaving the rest in the dishes, forming a layer that covers the bases of the dishes.

Pour the Meat Sauce over the aubergine slices.

Place the rest of the aubergine slices on top of the Meat Sauce.

Pour the cheese sauce on top, covering the aubergine layer as much as possible.

3 **BAKING:**

Bake at Gas Mark 5, about 45 mins, until the top is golden.

I suggest swapping the two dishes over in the oven halfway through – moving the top one down and the bottom one up - to share the heat.

NOTE: If cooking one Moussaka at a time [or making half the quantity], it will cook in about 35-40 minutes.

D **MAKES /SERVES:**

12 portions

E INGREDIENTS:

MEAT SAUCE:

Oil for frying
750g minced beef [ideally, lean, 5% fat] – or you can use minced lamb
3 large onions, sliced
4 cloves garlic, chopped
2 tins tomatoes
0.5 tube of tomato puree
2 dried bay leaves
2 level tsp ground cinnamon
Big shake of dried oregano
2 veg stock cubes [I like "green" [veg] Oxo cubes]
Pinch of sugar [brown or white]

AUBERGINE LAYER:

6 medium aubergines [or 5 large]
Sunflower or olive oil [or any preferred cooking oil]

CHEESE SAUCE:

1 litre milk
Flour: 40g
Butter: 40g
175g mature Cheddar
1 level tsp ground nutmeg

F SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

Pyrex dishes: 2
[30 x 20cm is an ideal size]
Large saucepan
Small saucepan
Frying pan
Whisk
Cheese grater [ideal but not essential]



PS1 GREEK SALAD:

Not a recipe – just throw the below ingredients into a bowl, with the rocket [or other leaf] going in first and the feta cheese, olives and grapes going on last. Forget all about salads being boring - this is a salad you'll want to have

with everything! [perhaps not cake... *although...!*]

Rocket [or rocket/spinach mix or any preferred salad leaf]

I always use Rocket - I love its wonderful, peppery flavour

Cucumber - sliced or chopped

Tomatoes - raw or cooked, whole or halved

Peppers - raw, sliced

Olives - green or black or both - whole or halved

Feta cheese - chopped

Grapes - yes, really! - whole or halved [optional]

Oil drizzled over the top of the salad [optional]

Seasoning [optional]

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