

TASTE WITHOUT WASTE

Vegetarian Moussaka

Serves 6-8

Ingredients

400g potatoes (2 large), peeled
Sunflower oil
1 large onion, finely chopped
3 garlic cloves, crushed
2 tbsp tomato paste
Big splash red wine
2 x 400g can chopped tomatoes
1 tsp dried oregano
Pinch cinnamon
Pinch sugar
400g can kidney beans, rinsed & drained
700g aubergines (2 medium-large), sliced into 0.5cm thick rounds
Sea Salt
Freshly ground black pepper
50g finely grated cheddar cheese
Cheese Sauce
20g butter
20g wholemeal flour
400ml milk (I used skim)
75g finely grated cheddar cheese
½ tsp Dijon mustard
1 tbsp lemon juice
¼ tsp salt

Method

Preheat the oven to 190C. Grease a 23x23x8cm heatproof dish. Boil the potatoes until just tender – when inserting a knife into the spud you should still feel a little resistance in the centre. Drain, set aside to cool slightly then slice into thin rounds.

Heat a scant tablespoon of oil in a medium sized saucepan. Saute the onion gently for about 4 minutes or until softened but not coloured. Add the crushed garlic and cook for another minute. Add the tomato paste and cook, stirring, for about 30 seconds or until beginning to caramelise. Deglaze with the red wine and then tip in the chopped tomatoes, oregano, cinnamon and sugar. Bring to the boil and simmer, covered for 10 minutes, stirring once or twice. Throw in the kidney beans and simmer, uncovered, for another 15-20 minutes or until the sauce has thickened slightly. Season well with salt and pepper and set aside.

Meanwhile start cooking off the aubergines. Heat a tablespoon or so of oil in a large frying pan (to make things quicker you can have 2 frying pans on the go). When the oil is sizzling, fry batches of the sliced aubergines in a single layer over a medium to high heat until softened and yellowy-golden on both sides. Transfer to a baking tray covered in kitchen paper to drain. Repeat the process, adding a little more oil after each batch, until all the aubergine is cooked.

Cheese Sauce

Melt the butter in a small saucepan over a low heat. Add the flour and stir vigorously for two minutes to form a roux. Remove the saucepan from the heat and gradually add the milk in a thin stream, beating all the while to prevent lumps from forming. Return the pot to the heat and bring the sauce to the boil, stirring all the while. Once at a boil, the sauce will thicken slightly. Simmer for 2 minutes, still stirring and then add the cheese, mustard, lemon juice and salt. Stir until the cheese has melted. Remove from the heat.

To assemble the moussaka, spoon 1/3 of the tomato-bean mixture into the bottom of your prepared dish. Top with a single layer of aubergine, a little less than a 1/3 of the cheese sauce and then a single layer of sliced potato. Repeat the process twice so that you finish with aubergine and then the cheese sauce. You should have 3 layers of tomato-bean mixture, 3 layers of aubergines and cheese sauce and 2 layers of potato. Sprinkle the 50g of grated cheese over the top and bake for approximately 1 hour or until the top is golden brown and bubbling. Set on a wire rack to 'rest' for 10 minutes before serving.

Source: Barely adapted from Sam Stern's *Get Cooking*.

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