

The Silk Road Cafe

The Silk Road Café - Chester Beatty Library - Dublin Castle - Dublin - Tel. 01 407 0770 - Fax 01 407 0788 - catering@silkroadcafe.ie



Mousakka

To serve 4.

INGREDIENTS:

2 medium aubergines

4 medium potatoes

2 medium courgettes

2 1/2 lbs minced lamb

1/2 lb grated white cheddar

1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

Tomato sauce ingredients

1/2 lb ripe tomatoes, roughly chopped

1 medium onion, finely chopped

2 dessert spoons tomato puree

1 tbsp or so extra virgin olive oil

3 fat cloves garlic, crushed

1 tsp dried oregano

1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper

1/4 tsp cinnamon

Prepare all the vegetables by slicing the aubergines, courgettes and peeled potatoes into thin discs.

Place on separate plates and cover with a damp tea towel and set aside until needed.

Gently fry the onion and the crushed garlic in the olive oil until soft but not brown, about two minutes.

Add the chopped tomatoes, the tomato puree, then the oregano, pepper, cinnamon and salt to taste. Stir, then turn the heat to low and allow the sauce to simmer.

In another pan brown the minced lamb, and when it is a good colour add about half the tomato sauce mix well.

When that's done, turn the mince out into a bowl into a bowl and wipe out the pan with a paper towel.

Now add another glug of oil and gently fry, separately, the aubergine, courgette and potato discs until each vegetable is softened but not brown.

They're all going to be cooked again in the oven, so being completely cooked through is not the object. As each is done, dry them on some kitchen paper.

Now assemble the Moussaka. In a reasonably deep baking dish spread the remaining tomato sauce in a layer over the bottom.

Then add about one quarter of the minced lamb mix, followed, one by one, by a quarter of the potatoes, then courgettes and, finally, aubergines.

Keep layering everything in this order until everything is finished - you should end up with four layers in total.

Sprinkle the grated cheese in a layer over the top and put the dish into a pre-heated 180 degree oven and cook, uncovered, for 15 to 20 minutes or until the cheese is bubbling and golden-brown on top.

Alternatively, as you are building up the layers of meat and vegetables in the baking dish you can add a sprinkling of cheese on top of each line of fried aubergines.

However, just make sure you've enough left for a good sprinkling of cheese on the top. This makes the dish nice and gooey in the centre.

Just before he serves this Abraham (head chef at The Silk Road Cafe) normally garnishes the top of the dish with freshly roasted red peppers.

At home you can get away with using some good quality Italian peppers from a jar.

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