



## **Moussaka**

Recipe by Stephen Pavy

This dish serves 8-10. It should be made in advance, and in fact it is better if made a day in advance and re-heated. It can be served hot or at room temperature.

This is a wonderful dish with our Joseph Phelps 2005 Insignia Joseph Phelps 2005 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon

### Ingredients

3 medium sized eggplant  
olive oil for brushing eggplant

4 Tbsp. butter (unsalted)  
3 large onions, coarsely chopped (I used Copra onions from my local farmer's market.)  
2 lbs. ground lamb  
3 Tbsp. tomato paste (I use Amore Italian tomato paste; it is double concentrated and comes in a tube.)  
½ cup red wine  
½ cup chopped parsley  
¼ tsp. freshly ground cinnamon – I keep sticks on hand and grind when needed.  
salt (to taste)  
freshly ground pepper (to taste)

1 quart milk  
6 Tbsp. flour  
8 Tbsp. butter (unsalted)  
4 eggs, beaten until frothy  
freshly grated nutmeg (to taste)  
2 cups ricotta cheese (Our local Bellwether ricotta is very fresh!)

1 cup fine bread crumbs (I buy Crostini from our market; already toasted with olive oil, but no herbs; then I put them in a bag and use a rolling pin to make bread crumbs)  
1 cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese (Do not use domestic! Use the real stuff!)

### Preparing the eggplant

Pre-heat broiler. Peel eggplant and cut into ½" thick round slices. Place eggplant slices on baking sheet(s) and lightly brush top side with olive oil. Place baking sheets 4-5 inches from broiler and broil for about 5 minutes until eggplant is golden to light brown. Turn slices and brush with olive oil. Return to broiler for 3-4 minutes until golden to light brown. Remove from oven and set aside.



### Preparing the meat sauce

Heat butter in large skillet or suitable cooking pot. Sauté onions until golden. Add ground lamb and cook for about 10 minutes until meat has lost its color. Add tomato paste, wine, parsley, cinnamon, salt and pepper (salt and pepper to taste). Simmer mixture over low heat, stirring frequently for 15-20 minutes and correcting seasonings.

Pre-heat oven to 375 (I use convection-bake setting, which takes less time than with an oven that does not have such a setting.)

### Preparing white sauce

Bring milk to near boiling in a sauce pan. Melt 8 Tbsp. butter in sauce pan and then blend in flour, stirring with wire whisk to blend; cook the flour for about 1 minute. Add hot milk gradually to butter/flour mixture, stirring constantly. When the mixture is thickened and smooth, remove from the heat and add ricotta cheese and nutmeg, blending well. When mixture has cooled somewhat, add the beaten eggs.

### Final steps

With olive oil, brush an 11" x 16" pan or oven proof casserole of comparable size. Sprinkle bottom of pan/casserole with a light layer of bread crumbs. Arrange a layer of eggplant (½ of slices); lightly salt and pepper eggplant layer. Spoon half of meat sauce over eggplant. Sprinkle ½ of remaining bread crumbs and ½ of Parmesan cheese over layer. Repeat sequence one more time until eggplant, meat sauce, bread crumbs and parmesan are used up. Pour the ricotta white sauce over the top. Bake 45-60 minutes, or until top is golden.