

# AMANDA'S MOUSSAKA



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For the moussaka:

- 1 aubergine, sliced length ways
- 3 courgettes, sliced length ways
- about 300 ml olive oil
- salt
- 2 large potatoes, peeled and sliced length ways
- 2 small onions, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 750 gram minced beef
- 3 beefsteak tomatoes, chopped
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 bay leaf
- 12 turns/grinds black pepper

For the bechamel sauce:

- 100 ml butter
- 100 gram plain flour (190 ml)
- 750 ml full-fat milk
- 3 eggs
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp grated nutmeg
- 150 gram cheese (Gruyere is best), freshly grated ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups)

Begin by salting the aubergine and courgette slices and leaving them for about 30 minutes, then rinse and dry on kitchen paper. Fry in plenty of the olive oil over a medium heat until lightly browned and starting to soften, then drain on kitchen paper and set aside. Fry the potatoes in the same

way.

In a separate pan, heat 70 ml of the olive oil and fry the onions and garlic for five minutes until softened. Add the minced beef and brown it before adding the tomatoes, cinnamon stick, bay leaf, one-and-a-half teaspoons of salt and the pepper. Simmer for 30-40 minutes. When done, remove the cinnamon and bay leaf.

In a deep, ovenproof dish, about 24 cm x 35 cm, arrange the potatoes in a layer. Top with a third of the beef, then the aubergine, another third of the beef, the courgettes, and finish with the remaining beef.

Heat the oven to 220°C.

Make the bechamel sauce:

Melt the butter in a saucepan over a gentle heat, stir in the flour and cook for two minutes so it loses its raw taste. Slowly incorporate the milk, and continue stirring until the sauce thickens.

Remove from the heat and whisk in the eggs, nutmeg and 100 gram of the grated cheese. Spread the bechamel over the layered meat and vegetables and top with the remaining 50 gram of grated cheese. Bake for 30 minutes, then take out and leave to cool.

Serve warm. The dish is also very good the following day.

Photo and Recipe: Amanda Conradie