

GUASTELLO'S VILLAGE MARKET

Greek Moussaka

Serves 6 to 8

Ingredients

For the lamb or beef

1/4 cup dried currants
1/4 cup Greek extra-virgin olive oil, divided
1 pound ground lamb or beef
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
1/8 teaspoon cayenne
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 large yellow onion, halved and thinly sliced
1 red bell pepper, stemmed, cored, and thinly sliced
1 serrano chile, finely diced
5 cloves garlic, finely chopped
2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 cup red wine
1 (28-ounce can) plum tomatoes, pureed until smooth with their juices
1/4 cup chopped fresh flat leaf parsley, plus more for garnish
2 tablespoons chopped fresh oregano
Honey, if needed

Eggplant:

1 1/2 cups canola oil
1 1/2 pounds eggplant, cut crosswise into 1/4-inch thick slices

Bechamel Sauce:

6 tablespoons unsalted butter
1/2 cup flour
2 1/2 cups milk
1 bay leaf
1/8 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
3 egg yolks
1/2 cup soft goat cheese
1 cup grated Romano
1 lemon, zested

For the lamb or beef: Soak the currants in warm water for 30 minutes. Drain.

Heat 1 tablespoon of the olive oil in a 6-quart saucepan over high heat. Add the lamb, cinnamon, ginger, allspice, cayenne, and salt and pepper and cook, stirring to break up the meat, until browned, about 5

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minutes. Transfer the lamb to a large strainer set over a bowl and drain; discard any liquid left in the pan. Return the pan to the heat and add the remaining 3 tablespoons olive oil and heat until it begins to shimmer. Add the onions and bell pepper and cook until soft, about 5 minutes. Add the serrano and garlic and cook for 1 minute. Add the tomato paste and cook for 1 minute.

Return the lamb to the pan, add the wine, and cook, stirring occasionally, until almost completely evaporated, about 5 minutes. Add the tomato puree and currants and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer until thickened, about 30 minutes. Stir in the parsley and oregano and season with salt and pepper and honey, if needed. Remove from the heat.

For the eggplant: Heat the canola oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Season the eggplant slices on both sides with salt and pepper. Working in batches, add the eggplant slices and fry until tender and lightly golden brown on both sides, about 5 minutes. Transfer the eggplant slices to paper towels.

For the béchamel: Melt the butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add the flour and cook, whisking constantly, until pale and smooth, 2 minutes. Still whisking constantly, add the milk and bay leaf and cook until thickened. Season with salt, pepper, and nutmeg and discard the bay leaf. Let the sauce cool for 5 minutes. In a small bowl, whisk together the egg yolks, goat cheese, and lemon zest and whisk into the béchamel sauce until smooth.

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Butter a 3-quart baking dish or casserole dish.

To assemble: Put half the eggplant slices in the dish and cover with half the meat sauce. Top the sauce with the remaining eggplant slices, and then the remaining meat sauce. Pour the béchamel over the top of the meat sauce and spread evenly with a rubber spatula. Sprinkle Romano evenly over the top, place the dish on a baking sheet, and bake until browned and bubbly, 45 to 50 minutes. Top with more chopped parsley, if desired. Let cool for at least 20 minutes before serving.

Credit: Bobby Flay