

Mousakka

Paired with Cabernet Sauvignon 2015

Ingredients

Eggplant and Lamb

- 8 garlic cloves, finely grated, divided
- ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons chopped mint, divided
- 2 tablespoons chopped oregano, divided
- 3 medium eggplants (about 3½ pounds total), sliced crosswise into ½-inch-thick rounds
- 2½ teaspoons kosher salt, plus more
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, plus more
- 2 pounds ground lamb
- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 1 3-inch cinnamon stick
- 2 Fresno chiles, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- ¾ cup dry white wine
- 1 28-ounce can whole peeled tomatoes

Béchamel and Assembly

- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 2½ cups whole milk, warmed
- ¾ teaspoon kosher salt
- 4 ounces farmer cheese, crumbled (about 1 cup)
- 2 ounces Pecorino or Parmesan, finely grated (about 1¾ cups), divided
- 3 large egg yolks, beaten to blend

Preparation

Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 475°. Whisk half of the garlic, ½ cup oil, 1 Tbsp. mint, and 1 Tbsp. oregano in a small bowl. Brush both sides of eggplant rounds with herb oil, making sure to get all the herbs and garlic onto eggplant; season with salt and pepper. Transfer eggplant to a rimmed baking sheet (it's okay to pile the rounds on top of each other) and roast until tender and browned, 35–45 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 400°. Meanwhile, heat remaining 2 Tbsp. of oil in a large wide pot over high. Cook lamb, breaking up with a spoon, until browned on all sides and cooked through and liquid from meat is evaporated (there will be a lot of rendered fat), 12–16 minutes. Strain fat through a fine-mesh sieve into a clean small bowl and transfer lamb to a medium bowl. Reserve 3 Tbsp. lamb fat; discard remaining fat. Heat 2 Tbsp. lamb fat in same pot over medium-high (reserve remaining 1 Tbsp. lamb fat for assembling the moussaka). Add onion, cinnamon, 2½ tsp. salt, and ½ tsp. pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until onion is tender and translucent, 8–10 minutes. Add chiles and remaining garlic and cook, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom of the pot, until onion is golden brown, about 5 minutes. Add paprika and tomato paste and cook until brick red in color, about 1 minute. Add wine and cook, stirring occasionally, until slightly reduced and no longer smells of alcohol, about 3 minutes. Add tomatoes and break up with a wooden spoon into small pieces (the seeds will shoot out at you if you're too aggressive, so start slowly—puncture the tomato, then get your smash and break on!). Add lamb and remaining 1 Tbsp. mint and 1 Tbsp. oregano and cook, stirring occasionally, until most of the liquid is evaporated and mixture looks like a thick meat sauce, 5–7 minutes. Pluck out and discard cinnamon stick.