

Greek Moussaka | Plant-Based

Swick

Serves 1 | Active Time: 1 hour 35 minutes | Total Time: 2 hours 45 minutes

Chef's Notes

*To make cashew cream as a non-dairy option in this recipe, when making the béchamel, simply blend in a blender 1 1/4 cups raw cashews (soaked) and 3 cups of water. This will produce about 4 cups of non-dairy cream.

Step 1: Making the Plant-Based "Meat" Sauce

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large onion
- 5 cloves garlic
- 3 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 whole cinnamon stick
- 1 1/2 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp allspice
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp freshly ground cloves
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 (15-oz) can whole tomatoes, rough chopped or crushed
- 1 cup water
- 1 (13.8-oz) pkg Gardein Beefless Ground
- 1 tsp sea salt
- 1/2 tsp ground pepper

To make the meatless sauce, first prepare your mise en place. Dice the onion and mince the garlic. Measure the spices and tomato paste and have the beefless ground and tomatoes on hand. Heat a large Dutch oven over medium-low heat. Add the olive oil and gently cook the onions until they are translucent and start to turn golden, about 8 to 10 minutes. Add the minced garlic and cook for an additional minute. Increase heat to medium-high, add the tomato paste and cook for a minute or so before adding the spices. Add the cinnamon stick, oregano, allspice, nutmeg, ground cloves, sea salt and pepper and cook for a few minutes.

Add the tomatoes. Crush them up a bit and then add the bay leaf. Stir well and continue to add a bit of water. Place on lid and bring just to a boil. Stir well and reduce the heat to low. Simmer for approximately 30 to 45 minutes. Adjust seasonings to taste. Once the dish has cooked and the flavors have all come together, add the beefless ground, stirring to coat it in the sauce. Add more water if the mixture seems a bit too dry. Lastly, taste for seasoning, adding salt and pepper as needed.

Step 2: Salting & Roasting the Eggplant

- 2 large eggplants
- olive oil, to lightly coat
- sea salt, to sprinkle on eggplant

To prepare the eggplant, first preheat the oven to 450°F (230°C). Wash and slice the eggplant into 1/2-inch rounds. Place onto a cooling rack and sprinkle both sides with the salt. Let sit for 20 minutes. Rinse the eggplant under cold water and dry well with paper towels. Lay the eggplant onto two baking sheets. Coat each piece of eggplant with olive oil and sprinkle with sea salt. Roast for approximately 25 minutes, flipping halfway through. To finish, turn on the broiler and broil for an additional 4 to 5 minutes per side to brown. Remove from oven and set aside on cooling rack. Reduce the oven to 350°F (180°C).

Step 3: Making the Béchamel Sauce

- 6 tbsp non-dairy butter
- 6 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 4 cups non-dairy milk, or cashew cream*
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg
- 1 tsp sea salt
- 1 tbsp potato starch
- 1 tbsp tapioca starch

To make the béchamel, in a medium-sized pot melt the non-dairy butter. Once melted, add the flour followed by the tapioca and the potato starch. Mix to combine and let cook for 5 minutes or so, stirring frequently until it turns a light golden color. Next, slowly add the non-dairy milk, and sea salt. Continue to add the cream, whisking constantly, until you reach the desired consistency. Lastly, add the freshly ground nutmeg and taste for seasoning.

Step 4: Assembling & Baking

- 2 tsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup fine bread crumbs

To assemble the moussaka, coat the bottom of a baking dish with bread crumbs and then cover the bottom with slices of eggplant. Spoon some of the beefless sauce over the eggplant. Using an offset spatula, gently spread the mixture to evenly cover the surface. Add the remaining slices of eggplant, followed by another layer of the beefless sauce, spreading to evenly cover the surface. Finish by spooning the béchamel over, making sure to completely cover the surface.

Bake in a 350°F (180°C) oven for approximately 40 minutes, or until heated through and golden brown on top. Let rest on a cooling rack for about 10 minutes before slicing. Serve this delicious moussaka with a nice light salad for a complete meal.