

Moussaka with Potato Base

Servings: 6–8

Ingredients

For the Potato Layer:

- 3–4 medium potatoes, peeled and sliced ¼-inch thick
- Olive oil, for brushing
- Salt and pepper

For the Meat Sauce:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 lb (450 g) ground beef or lamb
- 1 can (14 oz / 400 g) crushed tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon allspice (optional)
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, chopped

For the Béchamel Sauce:

- 4 tablespoons butter
- 4 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 cups milk, warmed
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- Salt and pepper
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan or Kefalotyri cheese
- 1 egg, lightly beaten

Directions

1. Prepare Potatoes:

- Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).
- Brush potato slices lightly with olive oil, season with salt and pepper.
- Roast in the oven for 15–20 minutes until tender but not browned. Set aside.

2. Make Meat Sauce:

- Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Sauté onion and garlic until softened.
- Add ground meat and cook until browned.
- Stir in crushed tomatoes, tomato paste, cinnamon, allspice, salt, pepper, and parsley. Simmer for 15 minutes until thickened.

3. Make Béchamel Sauce:

- Melt butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Stir in flour and cook 1–2 minutes.
- Gradually whisk in warm milk, stirring until smooth and thickened.
- Season with salt, pepper, and nutmeg. Remove from heat and stir in cheese.
- Let the sauce cool slightly, then stir in the beaten egg.

4. **Assemble Moussaka:**

- Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
- Grease a baking dish. Layer roasted potatoes on the bottom.
- Spread meat sauce evenly over the potatoes.
- Pour béchamel sauce over the meat layer, spreading to cover completely.

5. **Bake:**

- Bake for 35–40 minutes until the top is golden and bubbling.
- Let rest for 10–15 minutes before slicing.

6. **Serve:**

- Garnish with extra parsley if desired and serve warm.