



## MELITZANAS PAPOUTSAKIA

Serves 2

Many years ago there were no borders and like many people living around the Mediterranean, the Greeks lived happily amongst their neighbours. Food was shared and dishes were influenced by the regions people settled in. When the world started to change and people were sent back “to where they came from” they brought these dishes with them. A combination of flavours from the east and northern Africa with a touch of Greek thrown in. *Melitzanas Papoutsakia* means “little aubergine shoes”, little loafers filled with deliciousness!

### Ingredients:

2 medium-large eggplants  
200g minced beef/finely chopped onions  
1 small white onion, finely chopped  
2 cloves of garlic, minced  
1 teaspoon tomato paste  
75ml dry white wine  
1 large tomato, grated  
1 pinch powdered clove  
1 pinch of dried thyme  
1 bayleaf  
1 cinnamon stick  
Salt and pepper  
Olive oil

### For the béchamel

25g butter  
25g plain flour  
250ml milk  
Half teaspoon ground nutmeg  
1 large egg, beaten  
100g kalamotiri cheese/parmesan, grated

### Preparation:

- Thoroughly wash the aubergines and cut in half lengthways (if your aubergines are greenhouse grown, lightly salt the exposed flesh and leave them facing down on a baking tray for at least 30mins - this will draw out some of the bitter juices - not needed if they are organic and in season). Preheat your oven to 200c.
- When the aubergines are ready, score a crosshatch pattern into the flesh and brush with a light coating of olive oil, sprinkle lightly with salt, pepper and thyme. Place in the oven (facing up) for around 30mins until the flesh is darkened and tender.

- In a large saucepan, heat up two tablespoons of olive oil and sauté the minced beef/ finely chopped mushrooms over a high heat, until they are well browned. Add the finely chopped onion and sauté until soft. Add the garlic and cook for 3mins, then drop in the tomato paste and sugar, stirring well until fully combined but don't let it stick to the pan!
- When the paste begins sizzling pour in the wine and let it evaporate. Add the grated tomato, cloves, salt and pepper and cook on a medium heat for around 15-20mins, halfway through add the cinnamon stick and bayleaf and cook until almost all of the liquid has been absorbed.
- Once the meat sauce has cooked through, remove from the heat, discard the bayleaf and cinnamon stick and set the pan to the side, covering with a lid.
- Now we are going to make the béchamel! Take a fresh, medium sized saucepan that has a lid. Put in the butter and melt over a low heat.
- Add the flour a little at a time while whisking until a thick paste has formed. Take care as the flour needs to cook but not burnt. Once the paste has formed, slowly add the milk while continuing to whisk, waiting for the milk to be absorbed by the flour before adding the next splash of milk. Continue like this until all the milk is in the pot and mixture is thick and creamy. Remove from the heat, and add the nutmeg, salt, pepper and beaten egg, whisk until combined then add the grated cheese (hold some back for later) and mix to a smooth consistency. Cover with a lid to stop a skin from forming.
- Place your roasted aubergines on a baking tray and use a fork to gently mash the flesh - don't break the skin.
- Spoon the meat/mushroom sauce into the aubergine "shoes" and cover with the béchamel, spreading it to cover the whole surface of each aubergine.
- Sprinkle with cheese and bake in the oven at 180c for about 30-40mins until the dish is cooked through and the topping is golden brown.

Melitzanas Papoutsakia are a great main dish, and the combination of ingredients is a perfect match to a thick and creamy tzatziki. Enjoy with a nice glass of red wine like a Tempranillo or a Shiraz.

Καλη σας ορεχη!