

Vegan Moussaka

I really haven't thought about Moussaka in years, actually decades. The last time I had it in fact was at a pub in Oxford for heaven's sake. I do remember it being an amazing comfort food and that was exactly what I was searching to serve at last meal for months with Foix friends.

Once again I made enough to feed a small village and there was not a morsel left.

Enough for a 9" x 11" baking dish and 4-6 good appetites.

Ingredients

- 4 medium eggplant, cut into 1-2" cubes
- 6-8 large firm potatoes, cut in quarters lengthwise, steamed and peeled
- 4 Shallots peeled and diced
- 1 red onion, peeled and diced
- 1 ½ lbs of mushrooms, halved and sliced
- Fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 2 16 ounce cans of chopped tomatoes, or whole peeled tomatoes
- 1 tube or 28-ounce jar of tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons of maple syrup

Cashew cream

- 3 cups of raw cashews, soaked overnight or in hot water for an hour
- 1 14 ounce can of coconut cream or full-fat coconut milk— begin adding only ½ of the can then adjust to reach a thick cream of pouring consistency
- 1 cup of Almond milk
- 1 Veggie broth cube
- ½ cup of nutritional yeast
- Salt

- Pepper
- Red pepper flakes
- 1tbl of fresh or dried oregano
- 1 branch of thyme or 1 tea of dried thyme
- Cinnamon stick or 1 tea ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon Allspice
- ½ tea of freshly grated nutmeg
- A handful or two of pinenuts

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees
2. Toss eggplant with olive oil, lightly salt, spread on a baking sheet covered with parchment paper
3. Roast in the heated oven for 20-30 mins until pieces are tender but not falling apart
4. While the eggplant roasts, cover the bottom of a heavy dutch oven with olive oil and begin sauteing the shallots and onions over medium heat.
5. Add oregano, thyme, red pepper flakes, and allspice.
6. Add half of the mushrooms, cooking until brown, adding additional oil if necessary.
7. Remove cooked mushrooms to a plate and finish cooking the remainder, returning the others to the pan
8. Add chopped or whole tomatoes, using a wooden spoon to crush a bit, the tomato paste, maple syrup, the cinnamon stick, and salt and pepper to taste. Allow to gently simmer and thicken.
9. Begin assembling the moussaka by laying the bottom layer of potatoes, arranging them in the baking dish. Cover potato mixture with the eggplant, then pour over the tomato mushroom sauce.
10. Cover with foil, reduce oven temperature to 350 degrees and begin baking for 60 minutes.
11. While the moussaka bakes prepare the cashew cream topping. Combine all ingredients in a high-speed blender or use an immersion blender and process until very

smooth and creamy. Taste and adjust seasonings.

12. 15 minutes before moussaka is finished, remove the foil and pour a layer of the cashew cream over the top. Sprinkle with a bit of nutmeg and the pinenuts. Turn up the oven to 400 degrees and cook until the cream is set and beginning to brown.
13. Allow moussaka to set for 15- 30 minutes before serving.
14. Enjoy!