

GREEK LASAGNE (PASTITSIO) - *Saveur*, August 2010

The Cooks Next Door

FOR THE MEAT SAUCE:

1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil	1/3 cup red wine
2 green bell peppers, cored, seeded, and minced	1/4 tsp. crushed red chile flakes
2 medium yellow onions, minced	2 fresh or dried bay leaves
1 lb. ground beef, veal, or pork	1 2" cinnamon stick
3 oz. dry-cured chorizo, minced	Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
2 cups canned crushed tomatoes	Freshly grated nutmeg, to taste

FOR THE BÉCHAMEL AND PASTA:

8 tbsp. unsalted butter	Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1 cups flour	Freshly grated nutmeg, to taste
4 cups milk	1lb. No. 2 Greek macaroni, bucatini, or elbow macaroni
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese	2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
3 eggs, separated	

1. Make the meat sauce: Heat oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Add peppers and onions and cook, stirring often, until soft, 8–10 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer onion mixture to a plate and set aside. Add ground meat and chorizo to skillet and cook, breaking meat up into tiny pieces, until browned, 6–8 minutes. Add reserved onion mixture, along with tomatoes, wine, chile flakes, bay leaves, and cinnamon and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium and cook, stirring often, until sauce thickens, about 15 minutes. Remove sauce from heat, discard bay leaves and cinnamon, and season with salt, pepper, and nutmeg; let cool.
2. Make the béchamel: Heat butter in a 4-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Add flour and cook, whisking constantly, until smooth and slightly toasted, 1–2 minutes. Add milk; cook, whisking often, until sauce coats the back of a spoon, 8–10 minutes. Remove from heat, add 3/4 cup cheese and egg yolks; season with salt, pepper, and nutmeg. Stir until smooth; set aside.
3. Heat oven to 350°. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil; add pasta and cook halfway through, about 5 minutes. Meanwhile, whisk egg whites in a large bowl until frothy. Stir in remaining cheese; drain pasta in a colander and then toss with egg white–cheese mixture to coat evenly. Set aside.
4. Grease a deep 9" x 13" baking dish with olive oil. Place half the pasta mixture on bottom of dish and cover evenly with meat sauce. Top with remaining pasta mixture. Pour béchamel over pasta, spreading it evenly with a rubber spatula. Bake until the top is golden brown, about 1 hour. Transfer to wire rack; cool 20 minutes before serving.

SERVES 10 – 12