

# LAMB SHANK MOUSSAKA

Just now and then one does love to upset the apple cart a little... Here I take a well-known and -loved recipe and deconstruct it by using whole lamb shanks and thick generous slices of aubergine instead of the normal lambs' mince and thin slices of vegetables. Serve this on a large platter with a heap of steaming white rice.



FOR 8

350ml good olive oil  
75ml butter  
8 lamb shanks  
500 ml dry white wine  
1 bouquet garni\*  
6 leeks, sliced into circles  
1 litre meat stock  
2 medium brown onions, finely chopped  
12 cloves garlic  
500g small ripe tomatoes  
7.5ml brown sugar  
45ml dried origanum  
2 sticks cinnamon  
2.5ml grated nutmeg  
salt and white pepper to taste  
2 large shiny aubergines  
50g cake flour  
50ml cream  
5 sprigs fresh origanum, chopped

Heat 150ml of the olive oil and 15ml of the butter in a large casserole and lightly brown the lamb shanks. Pour in the wine and simmer until the alcohol in the wine has evaporated. Add the bouquet garni, leeks and stock. Cover and cook the shanks for about 2 hours until they are completely tender. Remove the shanks from the casserole with a slotted spoon and keep warm. Reserve the meaty stock.

Fry the chopped onions in 15ml butter in a pan until soft and translucent. Add the garlic, tomatoes, sugar, origanum, cinnamon and nutmeg, then simmer over a very low heat for at least 2 hours until the sauce has reduced to a thick, almost creamy consistency. Season lightly and set aside.

Cut the aubergines vertically into thick generous slices. Use a large, shallow saucepan and add just a little water and the remaining olive oil. Add the aubergine slices to the pan, cover and bring to a gentle boil. Cook until all the water has evaporated. Leave the aubergines to fry in the remaining oil until nicely browned. It isn't necessary to turn them.

To prepare a velouté (roux), melt the remaining butter in a small saucepan. Stir the flour into the butter and ladle a spoon of hearty, meaty stock from the lamb shank casserole dish into the roux. Keep stirring and keep on spooning stock from the casserole dish until you have a deliciously rich and creamy sauce. It is at this point, just to hedge my bets, that I always add a little cream! Taste and season lightly.

To serve, transfer the tender lamb shanks onto a large platter. Spoon the tomato sauce over the meat. Arrange the aubergine slices over the tomato sauce, which is covering the shanks. Ladle the creamy velouté over the aubergine, garnish with a little chopped origanum and serve immediately with white rice.

**\*Include a generous quantity of fresh thyme and origanum.**