



Greek Style Pasta with Lamb and Bechamel

Serves 8-10

Main Dish Ingredients

- 1 lb dried penne pasta
- 2 pounds of ground lamb
- 2 cups diced brown onions
- 4 cloves minced garlic
- ½ cup red wine (I just used leftover wine)
- 6 oz can tomato paste
- 2 cups water (option to add 1 tsp beef Better Than Bouillon optional - I like the additional salty flavor hit)
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- ⅛ tsp fresh ground nutmeg
- 1 tsp dried oregano

Béchamel Sauce Ingredients

- 6 Tbsp salted butter
- ½ cup all purpose flour
- 3 cups whole milk (warmed so it is like baby formula)
- 2 pinches cayenne pepper
- ¾ cup grated high quality parmesan/reggiano cheese

Instructions

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees with the rack in the center.

NOODLES:

Boil a large pot of salted water and cook the penne about a minute less than the package directions. Drain in a large colander and dump into a large bowl.

MEAT SAUCE:

In a large straight sided fry pan, cook the ground lamb, breaking it up with a wooden spoon until it is no longer pink, about six minutes. Add the onions and garlic and cook for another five minutes, stirring once or twice. Drain this mixture into the same colander in which you cooked the pasta.

Return the drained lamb/onion mixture to the saute pan. Add the wine and cook until most of the liquid is gone. Add hot water mixed with Better Than Bouillon if using that, and tomato paste, cinnamon, nutmeg and oregano. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until it is thick, about 15-20 minutes. Season with salt and fresh ground black pepper to taste.

FOR THE BECHAMEL TOPPING:

In a medium sized saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Whisk in flour and let it cook for a couple of minutes whisking constantly. Slowly pour in the milk a little at a time, whisking so it mixes well with the flour/butter. Cook until mixture thickens and bubbles, about six minutes. Stir in cayenne and grated cheese. Set aside.

TO ASSEMBLE:

Combine cooked penne and meat sauce and mix well. Place in the bottom of an oiled 9 x 13 inch ceramic dish. Pour the béchamel sauce on top and even it out with a knife. Bake until lightly browned in spots, about 35 minutes.

Remove from the oven and let it cool for 15 minutes before serving.