



CROATIAN MOUSSAKA

Adapted from Tony Kerum of
Tony's Food Service

SERVES 8

Active time: 1¼ hr Start to finish: 2¼ hr

Tony Kerum's deliciously satisfying version of Croatian moussaka—featuring potatoes in place of the more traditional eggplant—keeps film crews well fed.

For filling

- 2 lb tomatoes
- 4 lb large boiling potatoes
- 3 cups vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter

- 1 large onion, chopped
- 5 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 lb ground chuck
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 1½ oz finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano (¾ cup; see Tips, page 207)
- ½ cup fine dry bread crumbs

For topping

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and cooled
- 6 large eggs
- 1 cup whole milk
- 1½ oz finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano (¾ cup)
- ½ cup fine dry bread crumbs

Special equipment: a deep-fat thermometer

Make filling:

- ▶ Cut an X in bottom of each tomato with a sharp paring knife and blanch tomatoes together in a 6- to 8-quart pot of boiling water 10 seconds. Transfer tomatoes with a slotted spoon to a bowl of ice and cold water to cool. Peel off skin with paring knife, beginning from scored end, and discard. Finely chop tomatoes.
- ▶ Peel potatoes and cut into slices slightly less than ¼ inch thick.
- ▶ Heat oil in a 4- to 5-quart pot over moderately high heat until it registers 370°F on thermometer. Fry potatoes in

6 batches, turning over occasionally, until golden, about 6 minutes per batch, transferring with slotted spoon to paper towels to drain. (Return oil to 370°F between batches.)

▶ Heat butter in a wide 6- to 8-quart heavy pot over moderately high heat until foam subsides, then add onion and garlic and sauté, stirring occasionally, until golden, about 8 minutes. Add beef and sauté, stirring occasionally and breaking up large lumps with a wooden spoon, until meat is no longer pink, about 6 minutes.

▶ Add tomatoes, salt, and pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until almost all liquid is evaporated, 15 to 20 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in cheese and bread crumbs until just combined.

▶ Arrange one third of potatoes, overlapping slightly, in a buttered 13- by 9-inch glass baking dish, then spread with half of beef mixture. Repeat layer with potatoes and beef, ending with a third layer of potatoes.

Make topping and bake moussaka:

- ▶ Put oven rack in middle position and preheat oven to 375°F.
- ▶ Whisk together butter, eggs, milk, cheese, and bread crumbs until just combined, then pour evenly over potatoes.
- ▶ Bake until golden brown and bubbling around edges, 35 to 40 minutes. Cool slightly before serving. ☺