

Helen Brown Capital Recipe

Helen will be on the Drivetime show every Thursday from 6pm in "Foodie Thursday".



Greek Pastitsio

Mince and pasta bake with cheese sauce

Ingredients

1 tbsp olive oil
1 large onion, peeled and finely diced
2 large cloves garlic, minced
500g lean beef or lamb mince
1 tsp dried oregano
½ tsp ground cumin
1 cinnamon stick
1 bay leaf
Pinch of ground cloves

175ml vegetable or meat stock
1 tsp white vinegar
400g chopped tomatoes in tomato sauce
5 tbsp tomato paste
Salt and freshly ground pepper
400g macaroni, penne or buccatini pasta

Sauce

25g butter
2 tbsp plain white flour
1 tsp mustard powder
300ml milk
50g grated Grana Padano or Parmesan cheese plus 1 tbsp for topping

50g grated strong Cheddar cheese or Feta cheese crumbled
2 large eggs lightly beaten
Large pinch freshly grated nutmeg
¼ tsp dried thyme

Method

Heat the oil in a large pan over a medium heat and cook the onion and garlic for 5 minutes. Add the mince and brown for 5 minutes, breaking up with a wooden spoon. Stir in the spices, herbs, cinnamon stick and bay leaf. Add the chopped tomatoes, tomato paste, stock and vinegar. Season generously with salt and pepper. Bring to a simmer and cook for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the sauce is thickened. Remove the cinnamon stick and bay leaf. Cook the pasta until it is al dente. Rinse and drain and mix with the meat sauce. Pour into a large ovenproof dish.

Sauce: Melt the butter in a pan and whisk in the flour and mustard powder. Cook for 2 minutes. Gradually add the milk and whisk it in. Add the cheeses and whisk until melted. Remove from the heat and gradually whisk in the beaten eggs and nutmeg. Pour the cheese sauce over the pasta and place the dish on a large baking tray. Bake for 30 minutes then sprinkle with 1 tbsp of the grated cheese and the thyme. Bake for a further 10 minutes until the cheese layer is set. Cool for 10 minutes and serve with a green salad or steamed vegetables.