

FAKE MOUSSAKA (Faux Moussaka has a nice ring too):

NOTES: For better or worse, this baby is all mine. I do nothing ahead here but just brown, chop and add as I go. I violate almost every rule given in any moussaka recipe (I don't salt the eggplant and let it drip for an hour, I don't make a topping although I include the potato taste of the topping as an ingredient. This is a border-line skillet dinner. If you like moussaka you will like this; if you don't, you won't like this either. The potato flavor smoothes out the rough edges of the eggplant.) Use a BIG skillet. I use an aluminum foil cover since I don't have a cover as large as my biggest skillet. The combination of potato, eggplant, cinnamon and nutmeg is what gives this dish the Moussaka flavor.

1 pound ground turkey (or hamburger) <- going for reduced fat here  
1 tbsp olive oil <- not really needed, but adds to the Greek flavor  
1 yellow onion (diced)  
1 fairly large or 2 medium to small eggplants (any color you like)  
3 or 4 potatoes (fewer if low carbing)  
diced celery, carrots, parsley, tomatoes <- you pick, no carrot if low carbing  
8-16 oz chicken stock or broth (usually in a can or box)  
ground cinnamon and nutmeg <- gives the authentic flavor  
salt if you like it

Brown the ground meat in a bit of olive oil -- more for flavoring than for the oil content. While browning, dice or chop the onion. I devised a simple and fast way to do this (see below). Add the onion to the meat, stir and let the onions sauté. Dice and add optional vegetables (celery, carrots, parsley, tomatoes). Dice the eggplant (don't bother peeling and don't worry about soaking, salting, draining for an hour, etc.) and add. Dice the potatoes (I don't peel these either. Just do what you like to do) and add. Add chicken stock, season with salt, ground cinnamon and ground nutmeg to taste. Cover and simmer for about 40 minutes (timing isn't that critical - have a drink while waiting). I haven't had Domestica or Retsina wine with this although I bet it would be good. Beer was quite good. I believe it had aged about 2 weeks from the brewery to the store.

The ONION dicing thing:

Since I use onion in almost everything and hate the idea of shedding too many tears I figured out the following method to dice quickly. It uses the fact that onions are made of layers -- and if you slice those layers the right way, the thing will fall into a dice as it heats and gets stirred.

1. Snip the top and bottom from the onion (don't peel first), and cut into halves from top to bottom.
2. For each half, slip the knife edge under the skin layers at the end that probably wasn't the root end with the tight, dense circle. It is easier to remove the skin at the "less dense" end.
3. Separately (no kiddin') slice each half several times

(longwise) from end to end (top to bottom) holding the pieces in place with your fingers (don't slice those)

4. Finally, slice across those long sections and you have the dice that will fall apart as it cooks.

If this is confusing, let me know and I'll drag my video camera to the kitchen and take a few shots of the process. The only trick is cutting the halves like a round pan of fudge (tiny squares or rectangles) in steps 3 and 4. Dang, I wish I hadn't mentioned fudge. That would be soooo good -- and I do not need it -- at all.