

# PASTITSIO

## ΠΑΣΤΙΤΣΙΟ

Pastitsio

Heat  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (120 ml / 4 fl oz) of the oil in a large pan. Add the onion and cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes, until softened. Increase the heat to medium, add the ground beef, and cook, stirring and breaking up the meat with the spoon, for 10–15 minutes, until lightly browned. Stir in the tomatoes, tomato paste, cinnamon (if using), sugar, and parsley and season with salt and pepper. Reduce the heat and simmer for 15–20 minutes, or until the liquid has reduced. Remove from the heat and let cool for 5 minutes. Fold in the egg white and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (50 g / 2 oz) of the kefalograviera or Cheddar cheese. Taste and adjust the seasoning if necessary. Bring a large pan of water to a boil, stir in salt and the remaining oil, add the pasta, and cook for 8–10 minutes, or until al dente. Drain and toss with the melted butter, then let cool.

Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C / Gas Mark 4), brush a 10 x 14-inch (25 x 35-cm) ovenproof dish with melted butter and sprinkle with the bread crumbs. Stir the Gruyère cheese into the cooled pasta. Fold the egg yolks and the remaining kefalograviera or Cheddar into the white sauce, season with salt and pepper, and stir in the nutmeg. Line the base of the prepared dish with half the pasta mixture and spread the meat mixture on top. Cover with the remaining pasta and pour the white sauce over it. Bake for about 1 hour, or until the top is golden brown. Let the dish stand for 15 minutes before cutting into serving pieces. Serve hot.

Serves 4

Preparation time 1½ hours (including cooling)

Cooking time 1 hour

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- $\frac{3}{8}$  cup (150 ml /  $\frac{1}{4}$  pint) olive oil
- 1 onion, grated
- 1 lb 2 oz (500 g) ground (minced) beef
- 1 cup (250 ml / 8 fl oz) puréed peeled fresh or canned tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- pinch of ground cinnamon (optional)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon sugar
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh parsley
- salt and pepper
- 1 egg white, lightly beaten
- scant 1 cup (100 g / 3½ oz) grated kefalograviera or other semi-hard cheese such as Cheddar
- 11 oz (300 g) thick tube-shaped pasta, such as macaroni or ziti
- 4 tablespoons melted butter, plus extra for brushing
- 2 tablespoons fine bread crumbs
- 2 cups (225 g / 8 oz) grated Gruyère cheese
- 3 egg yolks, lightly beaten
- 3 cups (750 ml / 1¼ pints) light White sauce (p 57)
- pinch of grated nutmeg