

Sickles Market

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Chickpea and Eggplant Moussaka
Aliza Green, *Beans*, Running Press, 2004

Serves 6

1 large onion, diced
1 tablespoon chopped garlic
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 (28 ounce) can plum tomatoes, chopped
½ cup dry white vermouth
1 tablespoon ground toasted cumin seeds
1 tablespoon ground toasted coriander seeds
3 bay leaves
salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 (1pound) firm, shiny eggplant, cut into 1-inch cubes
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons chopped fresh marjoram leaves, or 1 tablespoon dried oregano
1 tablespoon chopped garlic
2 teaspoons kosher salt and ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 teaspoon hot red pepper flakes or Korean red pepper flakes
2 cups cooked chickpeas, rinsed and drained
¼ pound mild goat cheese, crumbled

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. In a medium saucepan, cook the onion and garlic in the olive oil over medium heat, until softened but not browned. Add the tomatoes, vermouth, cumin, coriander, and bay leaves. Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer until thickened, stirring occasionally, about 20 minutes. Discard the bay leaves and season to taste with salt and pepper.

2. Toss the eggplant cubes with the olive oil, marjoram, garlic, salt and black pepper, and red pepper flakes in a large bowl. Spread out in a single layer on a large, shallow baking pan. Roast for 20 minutes; then shake the pan to release the eggplant and turn the pieces over so they cook evenly. Return to the oven and bake for 20 minutes longer, or until the eggplant is brown and crusty on the outside and creamy on the inside. Spread on the bottom of either a 2-quart shallow baking dish or 6 individual ovenproof casserole dishes.

3. Stir the chickpeas into the onion mixture and cook about 10 minutes, or until somewhat thickened. Spread the chickpea mixture over the eggplant, and then top with the crumbled goat cheese. (The dish may be prepared to this point up to 2 days before finishing. Cover and refrigerate.)

4. When ready to serve, preheat the oven to 400°F. Bake for 30 minutes, or until the mixture is bubbling and the cheese is browned. Allow the dish to cool for 5 to 10 minutes before serving.