

Eggplant and Zucchini Pie with Roasted Bell Pepper Sauce

(Yields: 6 – 8 Servings)

For this recipe you will need:

- 1 pre-baked pie shell (baked in a deep dish pie pan)

Eggplant Filling:

- 3 eggplants, ends cut off and cut in half lengthwise
- 5 tablespoons butter
- ½ cup flour
- 2 cup milk
- 4 oz goat cheese
- 4 large eggs
- Nutmeg, to taste
- Salt & Pepper, to taste
- 1 teaspoon garlic, finely minced
- Plum tomatoes, thinly sliced
- 4 small zucchini, thinly sliced (about 1 lb)
- ½ cup fresh bread crumbs
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil

Roasted Red Bell Pepper Sauce:

- ¼ tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- Onion, minced
- 2 cloves garlic, finely minced
- Plum tomatoes, blanched, peeled, seeded, diced
- 1 large red bell pepper, roasted, peeled, seeded and diced
- ½ teaspoon fresh thyme leaves
- 1 teaspoon sugar or honey
- Salt & Pepper, to taste
- 6 fresh basil leaves, minced

Preheat oven to 350° F.

To prepare the filling, lightly brush a baking pan with olive oil. Place the eggplant halves skin side up on the pan and roast in the oven for 40 – 45 minutes, or until completely tender. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool. When cool, carefully scoop out the flesh and transfer to a strainer, discarding the skin. Let drain for 20 minutes, and then chop coarsely.

Melt the butter in a saucepan over low heat. Stir in the flour and cook for 2 to 3 minutes, or until blended. Gradually pour in the milk while stirring and continues to stir until the mixture thickens. Remove from the heat. Fold in the goat cheese and the eggs one by one. Season to taste with salt, pepper and a dash of nutmeg. Add the chopped eggplant and garlic into the mixture.

Spoon the eggplant mixture into the pie shell and spread it out evenly. Slice the tomatoes and zucchinis into thin slices. Beginning on the outermost edge of the pie and working clockwise, arrange alternating tomato and zucchini disks on top of the eggplant mixture, overlapping slightly. To fill the center, arrange alternating tomato and zucchini disks counter clockwise, overlapping slightly. Sprinkle with the breadcrumbs, thyme leaves and 2 tablespoons of the olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Place the eggplant pie on a baking sheet in the center of the oven and bake about 30 minutes.

To prepare the sauce, combine the olive oil and onion in a saucepan and sauté over medium heat for 3 minutes, or until translucent. Stir in the garlic, tomatoes, bell pepper, thyme, sugar, salt and pepper and cook for 15 minutes, or until it thickens. Adjust the seasonings if necessary and stir in the basil. Keep warm.

Remove the pie from the oven and un-mold onto a warm serving dish or cut into slices. Serve with the sauce on the side.