

Lasagna

A good lasagna always makes diners happy, and this one will not disappoint.

It's Sunday so perhaps you'll enjoy extra time to make this classic dish. Start assembly in the afternoon, and it will hold until you're ready to bake. Plan to start baking the Lasagna about 1-1/2 hours before you wish to dine.

Preparation Time: 2 hours and 40 minutes - Servings: 4-6

Organize Your Ingredients!

Notes on Organizing

Prep and organize ingredients on small plates or in bowls. Prep a total of 8 cloves of chopped garlic: Marinara Sauce (4 cloves), Ground Meat (2 cloves), Salad Dressing (1 clove) and Lasagna (1 clove). Prep 1 C. of chopped onion: Ground Meat (1/3 C.), Marinara Sauce (1/2 C.) and Salad Dressing (2 T.). Plan on using 1-2/3 C. wine in the Marinara Sauce.

Marinara Sauce

1 tsp. olive oil
4 cloves garlic (smashed and chopped)
1/2 C. red wine
1/2 C. yellow onion (chopped)

one 15 oz. can no-salt diced tomatoes
one 15 oz. can regular tomato sauce
another 1/2 C. red wine

2 T. dry basil leaves
1 T. dry oregano leaves
a few dashes Tabasco sauce

1 tsp. olive oil
half of the chopped garlic (above)
another 2/3 C. red wine

Salad and Dressing

Fixings for a green salad

Basil Vinaigrette Dressing:

12 basil leaves (washed and patted dry)
1 small clove garlic (smashed and chopped)
2 T. yellow onion (coarsely chopped)
1 tsp. Dijon mustard
1 tsp. soy sauce
2 T. balsamic vinegar
4 T. olive oil
1/3 C. low-sodium vegetable broth

Ground Meat Options

1 tsp. olive oil
8 oz. Beyond Meat (or equivalent plant-based crumbled meatless product)
or
10 oz. ground beef or ground turkey
1 clove garlic (smashed and chopped)
1/3 C. yellow onion (chopped)

Lasagna

1 package (12 oz.) whole-wheat or quinoa lasagna noodles
3 C. fresh spinach leaves (washed, coarsely chopped)
2 tsp. olive oil
1 tsp. balsamic vinegar
2/3 C. shredded skim milk mozzarella
1/2 C. shredded Parmesan
1 -1/2 C. low-fat Ricotta Cheese
1 egg (whisked)
1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
1 tsp. olive oil
three 6" baby zucchinis (cut into rounds)
1 clove garlic (smashed and chopped)
1 tsp. olive oil
2-1/2 C. cremini mushrooms (sliced)

Let's Prepare, Cook, and Plate This!

Basic Assembly Instructions

Assemble lasagna earlier in the day and refrigerate.
Begin by putting pasta water on to boil.

Once you've got the Marinara Sauce made and meat browned, you're on your way.
These instructions are longer than most recipes so that we can share each step carefully.

Marinara Sauce

1. Toss 1/2 of the chopped garlic in olive oil over medium-high heat until garlic starts to turn golden brown. Add 1/2 C. red wine and bring to boil. Cook 1 minute.
2. Add onion and toss until wine is almost gone.
3. Add tomato sauce (rinse cans with additional 1/2 C. red wine and add to sauce.)
4. Add spices and Tabasco. Bring to boil. Cover, reduce heat to low and cook 10-minutes.
5. Using a separate sauté pan, brown remaining 1/2 chopped garlic in oil. Add another 2/3 C. wine, bring to a boil, cook for about a minute and turn off heat.
6. Add this additional wine and garlic to the large pan. Stir well and remove from burner.

Ground Meat Options

Brown meat or plant-based choice with garlic and chopped onion in oil until meat and onions are well browned. Remove from heat and set aside.

Lasagna Preparation

1. Cook noodles in lightly-salted boiling water for 8 minutes. Drain and rinse. Separate noodles as you rinse to be sure they don't stick together. I often leave them in a little cold water after rinsing.
3. Measure spinach into a large bowl and toss with oil and vinegar. Set aside.
4. Toss Mozzarella and Parmesan in a bowl. Set aside.
5. Mix ricotta with whisked egg and nutmeg. Set aside.
6. Brown zucchini rounds in oil. Add chopped garlic and toss until garlic is fragrant. Remove from pan.
7. Using same pan, brown sliced mushrooms in olive oil. Remove from pan and set aside.

(Recipe continued on next page)

Finish Assembly, Bake and Plate This Meal!

Lasagna Assembly and Bake

Rub a 9X13" baking dish with oil and begin layering in Lasagna as follows:

Layer 1: 1/2 C. Marinara sauce, a layer of noodles covered with all of the meat, spinach and 1/2 of the mozzarella/Parmesan mixture.

Layer 2: A layer of noodles, 1/2 C. sauce and ricotta/egg mixture.

Layer 3: A layer of noodles, 1/2 C. sauce and zucchini and mushrooms.

Layer 4: A layer of noodles, 1/2 C. sauce and remaining mozzarella/Parmesan cheese mixture.

When ready to bake, preheat oven to 375°.

Cover with foil and place lasagna pan on a cookie sheet to catch boil-over drippings and cook in preheated oven for 1 hour. Set a timer.

When timer sounds, switch oven to broil setting. Remove foil and allow cheese to start to brown. This will happen quickly so stay with it. Remove lasagna from oven and rest it for 25-30 minutes.

Salad and Dressing

Make green salads on individual plates.

Basil/Vinaigrette Dressing:

Blend all dressing ingredients in a food processor until smooth.

Plate the Meal

Serve one 3"X 4" rectangle of lasagna per serving. I like to feature the lasagna and place each portion in the center of a serving plate. I sometimes place a single fresh basil leaf on top of each serving.

Serve salads and dressing on the side.

What I've Learned from this Recipe

I prefer to prepare ingredients separately. Browning zucchini and mushrooms, and dressing the spinach, etc., makes a difference in the way individual flavors present themselves in the finished dish.

Let us know what you think, and ask any questions you may have! chezdon@plate6.com