

COOK'S

ILLUSTRATED

SIMPLE LASAGNA WITH HEARTY TOMATO-MEAT SAUCE

Serves 6 to 8. Published September 1, 2002.

If you can't find meatloaf mixture for the sauce, or if you choose not to eat veal, substitute 1/2 pound ground beef and 1/2 pound sweet Italian sausage, casings removed, for the meatloaf mixture. The assembled, unbaked lasagna, if wrapped tightly in plastic wrap and then in foil, will keep in the freezer for up to 2 months. To bake, defrost it in the refrigerator for a day or two and bake as directed, extending the baking time by about 5 minutes.

INGREDIENTS

Tomato-Meat Sauce

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium onion , chopped fine (about 1 cup)
- 6 medium cloves garlic , pressed through garlic press or minced (about 2 tablespoons)
- 1 pound meatloaf mix or 1/3 pound each ground beef chuck, ground veal, and ground pork (see note)
- 1/2 teaspoon table salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup heavy cream
- 1 can (28 ounces) tomato puree
- 1 (28-ounce) can diced tomatoes , drained

Ricotta, Mozzarella, and Pasta Layers

- 15 ounces ricotta cheese (whole milk or part skim), 1 3/4 cups)
- 2 1/2 ounces grated Parmesan cheese (1 1/4 cups)
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh basil
- 1 large egg , lightly beaten
- 1/2 teaspoon table salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 12 no-boil lasagna noodles from one 8- or 9-ounce package
- 16 ounces whole milk mozzarella , shredded (4 cups)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. 1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 375 degrees.
2. 2. Heat oil in large, heavy-bottomed Dutch oven over medium heat until shimmering but not smoking, about 2 minutes; add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened but not browned, about 2 minutes. Add garlic and cook until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Increase heat to medium-high and add ground meats, salt, and pepper; cook, breaking meat into small pieces with wooden spoon, until meat loses its raw color but has not browned, about 4 minutes. Add cream and simmer, stirring occasionally, until liquid evaporates and only fat remains, about 4 minutes. Add pureed and drained diced tomatoes and bring to simmer; reduce heat to low and simmer slowly until flavors are blended, about 3 minutes; set sauce aside. (Sauce can be cooled, covered, and refrigerated for up to 2 days; reheat before assembling lasagna.)
3. 3. Mix ricotta, 1 cup Parmesan, basil, egg, salt, and pepper in medium bowl with fork until well-combined and creamy; set aside.
4. 4. Assemble first lasagna layer according to illustrations below. Repeat layering of noodles, ricotta, mozzarella, and sauce two more

times. Place 3 remaining noodles on top of sauce, spread remaining sauce over noodles, sprinkle with remaining cup mozzarella, then with remaining 1/4 cup Parmesan. Lightly spray a large sheet of foil with nonstick cooking spray and cover lasagna. Bake 15 minutes, then remove foil. Return lasagna to oven and continue to bake until cheese is spotty brown and sauce is bubbling, about 25 minutes longer. Cool lasagna about 10 minutes; cut into pieces and serve.

STEP-BY-STEP

Assembling Lasagna



1. Smear entire bottom of 9- by 13-inch baking dish with 1/4 cup meat sauce. Place 3 noodles on top of sauce.

2. Drop 3 tablespoons ricotta mixture down center of each noodle. Level by pressing flat with back of measuring spoon.



3. Sprinkle evenly with 1 cup shredded mozzarella.



4. Spoon 1 1/2 cups meat sauce evenly over cheese.



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