

# Lasagna Elegante

Serves 8-10 people.

## Ingredients

1/2 pound uncooked lasagna noodles

### MEAT SAUCE

- 1/2 pound spicy Italian sausage, casing removed
- 1/2 pound ground beef
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 T olive oil
- 2 cans 28-ounce whole peeled tomatoes, smashed
- 2 T chopped fresh parsley (can sub 2 teaspoons dried)
- 1 1/2 t salt
- 1 t dried basil
- 1/2 t dried oregano
- 1/4 t freshly ground pepper

### BÉCHAMEL SAUCE

- 1/4 pound butter, (8 tablespoons) (I cut into pieces to melt faster)
- 4 T flour
- 1 cup milk (or low-fat milk)
- 1 cup chicken broth (can sub any other broth/stock)
- 1/8 t salt

### RICOTTA FILLING

- 1 egg, beaten
- 1/2 pound ricotta cheese
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 t salt
- 1/8 t nutmeg (freshly ground preferred)
- 1 1/2 cups freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 4 ounces mozzarella cheese (shredded or sliced)
- 4 ounces Monterey Jack cheese (shredded or sliced)
- 3 T butter, diced (can be reduced)

## Directions

1. **Meat Sauce:** Sauté meats, onion, and garlic in olive oil until meat is no longer pink. Use a blunt edge wooden spoon, or the like, to break up the meat. Add remaining meat sauce ingredients. Break up the tomatoes as much as you can. Simmer until sauce is quite thick, about 30 minutes. Skim fat from surface.

2. **Béchamel Sauce:** In saucepan melt butter. Add flour, and cook 1 minute, stirring with whisk. Continuing to stir, slowly add liquids and bring to boil. Stir in salt. (I like this sauce to be on the thicker side, but it doesn't have to be super thick. It's all going to meld into creamy wonderfulness in the lasagna!) Remove from heat. The sauce will thicken as it cools.

3. **Ricotta Filling:** Combine all ricotta filling ingredients. Mix well.

4. **Assemble:** In lightly greased 9x13 baking pan, layer ingredients in following order: small amount meat sauce, half the noodles, half the remaining meat sauce, 1/2 cup béchamel, 1/2 cup Parmesan, 2 ounces mozzarella, 2 ounces Monterey Jack, half the ricotta filling, remaining noodles, remaining meat sauce, 1/2 cup béchamel, 1/2 cup Parmesan, remaining mozzarella, Monterey Jack, ricotta filling, remaining béchamel sauce, and remaining Parmesan. Dot with butter.

5. **Cook:** Bake uncovered in preheated 400 oven 30-40 minutes until bubbling. Let the lasagna set for 10 minutes before slicing.

6. **Make Ahead Tip:** If making ahead and you want to freeze, don't bake it first. Let assembled lasagna cool and then wrap well and put in freezer. I usually take it out in the morning and put it in the oven on a timer to be ready for dinner with the above temp and minutes. If you make ahead and put in the fridge, be sure to either put your lasagna in the oven right as you heat the oven, or bring the lasagna to room temp. Same if you want to cook from frozen - you don't want your lasagna pan to suffer thermal shock from being super cold and being put in a very hot oven.

Greystone