



VEGETABLE LASAGNA

Lasagna made with layers of lamb mince, baked bean and tomato ragu, roasted butternut, creamed spinach and a bechamel and pecorino topping.

YIELD: 8 - 10 servings PREP TIME: 15 minutes COOKING TIME: 90 minutes



Lamb Ragu

1 tablespoon Olive oil
2 medium Onions, finely diced
2 cloves Garlic, minced
500 g Lamb mince
2 medium Carrots, peeled and grated
1 stalk Celery, washed and finely chopped
1 cup Lamb / chicken stock
1 can Whole peeled tomatoes
2 tablespoons Tomato paste
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 tablespoon Chutney
¼ cup Oregano, fresh or 1 tablespoon dried
1 teaspoon Salt
½ teaspoon Freshly ground pepper
1 tin Baked beans

Roasted Butternut

1 kg Butternut, peeled and sliced
1 tablespoon Olive oil
1 teaspoon Salt
½ teaspoon Freshly ground pepper
1 teaspoon Thyme, dried or 4 stalks fresh thyme

Creamed Spinach

500 g Spinach, washed and stems removed
2 cups Chunky cottage cheese
½ cup Cream
1 cup Pecorino cheese, finely grated
½ teaspoon Ground nutmeg
½ teaspoon Salt
¼ teaspoon Freshly ground pepper

Bechamel

6 tablespoons Butter
½ cup Flour
1 teaspoon Salt
4 cups Milk
12 Lasagna sheets
½ cup Mozzarella, grated
½ cup Pecorino cheese, finely grated

Prepare the ragu:

Use a large heavy based pan. Heat the oil and over medium add the onions and garlic and sauté 10 minutes until golden brown. Turn the stove onto high and add the mince. Use a large fork and crumble the meat. Fry until browned. Turn the heat to medium. Add the carrot and celery. Mix well and sauté for a further 5 minutes. Add the stock and loosen the browned bits from the pan. Add the tomatoes crushing them to break them up and mix in with the meat mixture. Add the tomato paste, Worcestershire sauce, chutney and oregano, salt and pepper. Stir the mixture to blend well. Turn the heat to low and simmer for an hour. Add the baked beans and simmer for a further 10 minutes.

Prepare the butternut: (prepare this while ragu is cooking)

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Place the butternut on a lined baking tray, drizzle with oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Sprinkle the thyme over the butternut. Roast for 15-20 minutes until golden and tender. Set aside.

Prepare the creamed spinach: (prepare this while ragu is cooking)

Place the spinach into a large heatproof bowl and cover with boiling water. Allow to stand for 10 seconds, drain and try to remove as much of the moisture as possible by placing it between clean kitchen cloths and pressing it to dry. Finely chop the spinach and place in a bowl with the cottage cheese, cream, pecorino, nutmeg, salt and pepper and mix to combine the spinach and cheese. Set aside.

Prepare the bechamel:

Melt the butter in a saucepan. Add the flour and salt and create a smooth paste. Cook for 1-2 minutes over medium heat. Add the milk and stir until thick and smooth. Let the bechamel cook for 5 minutes to ensure that the mixture is cooked through.

Assembling the Lasagna:

Cook the lasagna sheets in a large saucepan of salted boiling water for 4-5 minutes or until partially cooked. To assemble the lasagna, place ¼ cup of bechamel into the base of a lightly greased a large ovenproof dish. Place prepared lasagna sheets on the bechamel. Top with 2 cups of ragu, place ½ of the roasted butternut over the mixture and then cover with 1 cup of the spinach mixture. Pour over ½ cup of bechamel. Cover with lasagna sheets and repeat with the remaining ingredients, finishing with the remaining lasagna sheets and bechamel sauce. Sprinkle the mozzarella cheese over the top and finish the assembled lasagna with a sprinkling of the grated Pecorino. Cover with aluminum foil and bake for 30 minutes. Uncover and bake a further 15 minutes or until cooked through and the cheese is golden and the top crispy. Leave to stand and settle for 15 minutes before serving.