

Traditional Lasagna with Bolognese Sauce

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A traditional dish from Emilia-Romagna, this traditional Lasagne alla Bolognese recipe calls for egg pasta, creamy béchamel, and Bolognese ragù. We know. It's no surprise that this tasty dish is one of the most ancient pasta recipes on record. Once you try it, you want to be eating it for centuries yet to come.

Yield: 6 servings

For the Lasagne

1 recipe egg pasta dough or dry lasagne
1 recipe besciamella (béchamel)

For the Bolognese Sauce



½ cup extra virgin olive oil
½ cup butter, cubed
1 cup onions, chopped small
½ cup celery, chopped small
¼ cup carrots, chopped small
¼ pound pancetta, ground (you can ask your butcher to do this)
1 pound ground veal
½ pound ground beef
1 pound ground pork
1 cup white wine
½ cup tomato paste
½ cup chicken or beef stock
Salt and pepper to taste

To prepare the Bolognese Sauce (Ragù):

In a large Dutch oven or saucepan, heat the olive oil and butter. Add the onions, celery and carrots and cook until they become very soft and begin to caramelize. In a large bowl, mix together the pancetta, veal, beef and pork. Add the meats to the pan and cook until they begin to brown. Add the wine and continue to cook until most of the liquid is evaporated—it should just be moist around the edges of the meat. Add the tomato paste and stir well. Reduce the heat to low and cook for 2 hours.

To create the lasagne:

If making your own pasta, divide the dough into 8 portions. Roll each one out through the thinnest setting on a pasta machine and lay the sheets on a lightly floured surface to dry for 10 minutes. Cut the pasta into 5-inch squares and cover with a damp kitchen towel.

Bring 6 quarts of water to a boil in a large pot and add 2 tablespoons salt. Set up an ice bath next to the stovetop. Drop the pasta into the boiling water, 6 or 7 pieces at a time (or according to dry pasta package cooking time), and cook until tender, about 1 minute. Transfer to the ice bath to cool, then drain on kitchen towels, laying the pasta flat.

To assemble the dish:

Preheat the oven to 375°F.

Assemble the lasagne in a 10-by-20-inch lasagna pan: spread a layer of Bolognese ragù over the bottom and top with a sprinkling of Parmigiano Reggiano DOP, a layer of pasta, a layer of besciamella, another layer of ragù, a sprinkling of Parmigiano Reggiano DOP and pasta. Repeat until all the ingredients are used up, finishing with a layer of pasta topped with besciamella, sauce and Parmigiano Reggiano.

Bake for 45 minutes, or until the edges are browned and the sauces are bubbling. Allow the lasagna to stand for 10 minutes before serving, then enjoy. Have leftovers? Even better: the flavors will "get better acquainted," as our chefs like to say.

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