

Lasagna

Lasagna (singular, pronounced /la'zan.ja/), also lasagne (plural, pronounced /la'zan.je:/), is both a form of pasta in sheets (sometimes rippled, though seldom so in Italy) and also a dish, sometimes named lasagne al forno (meaning "oven-cooked lasagne") made with alternate layers of pasta, cheese, and often ragù (a meat sauce) or tomato sauce. While it is traditionally believed to have originated in Italy, the recipe was also featured in the first cookbook ever written in England., the claim is far from universally accepted (see the much earlier Roman use of "lasanum" below). The Italian embassy in London particularly speaks out against such theories.



1/2 cup Spinach, cooked and chopped
Olive Oil as needed

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

In either a large sauté pan or pot, sauté the onions until they are opaque. Remove from the pan and add the beef and sausage. Cook until the meats are cooked and drain. Return the onions and add the garlic, basil and oregano. Stir for one minute. Add all of the tomatoes, water, fennel, 1 Tbsp. salt, 1 tsp. pepper, and half of the parsley. Simmer for 45 minutes.

In a mixing bowl, combine ricotta cheese with egg, remaining parsley, spinach, and 1/2 teaspoon salt.

The word "lasagna" is derived from the Greek word "lasanon" meaning chamber pot. The word was later borrowed by the Romans as "lasanum" to mean cooking pot. The Italians then used the word to refer to the dish in which what is now known as lasagna is made. The word lasagna or lasagne (plural) now simply applies to the food itself. Most English-speaking people follow the Italian usage and use the plural "lasagne" to refer to both the dish and the pasta, but Americans commonly use the singular "lasagna".

Various recipes call for several kinds of cheese, most often ricotta and mozzarella. The classic Lasagne alla Bolognese uses only Parmigiano Reggiano. Many recipes also add bechamel sauce.

A variant is Lasagne verde (green lasagne) which is the normal egg pasta with spinach added. Other variations include vegetarian or seafood versions of the dish.

To assemble, spread 1 1/2 cups of meat sauce in the bottom of a 9x13 inch baking dish. Arrange 6 noodles lengthwise over meat sauce. Spread with one half of the ricotta cheese mixture. Top with a third of mozzarella cheese. Spoon 1 1/2 cups meat sauce over mozzarella, and sprinkle with 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese. Repeat layers, and top with remaining mozzarella and Parmesan cheese. Cover with foil: to prevent sticking, either spray foil with cooking spray, or make sure the foil does not touch the cheese. Bake in preheated oven for 25 minutes. Remove foil, and bake an additional 25 minutes. Cool for 15 minutes before serving.

Lasagna al Forno

Serves 12

1 lb. Sweet Italian Sausage
3/4 lb. Lean Ground Beef
1/2 cup Onion, small dice
2 Tbsp. Garlic, minced
1 (28 ounce) can Crushed Tomatoes
2 (6 ounce) cans Tomato Paste
2 (6.5 ounce) cans Tomato Sauce
Sugar as needed
1 Tbsp. Basil, chiffanade
2 tsp. Oregano, chopped
1 tsp. Fennel Seeds, ground
1 Tbsp. Salt
1 tsp. Fresh ground Pepper
3 Tbsp. Parsley, chopped
12 Lasagna Noodles, cooked
16 oz. Ricotta Cheese
1 Egg
1/2 tsp. Salt
1 1/2 lbs. Mozzarella, shredded
1 cup Parmesan, grated