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Traditional Lasagna

Serves 12-16

Bolognese Sauce Ingredients:

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 onion, finely minced in a food processor
2 stalks celery, finely minced in a food processor
2 small carrots or one large carrot,
finely minced in a food processor
4 cloves garlic, finely minced in a food processor
1/2 pound ground beef
1/2 pound ground sweet Italian sausage
1 (28 oz) can diced tomatoes
6 oz tomato paste
1/2 cup red wine
2 teaspoons dried basil
2 teaspoons dried oregano
2 bay leaves
1/2 teaspoon Kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Directions:

Make the Bolognese Sauce:

1. Sauté the minced onion, celery, carrot, and garlic in 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Cook until the vegetables are translucent.
2. Add the ground beef and sweet Italian sausage. Cook the meat until it is finely ground and well browned.
3. Add the diced tomatoes and tomato paste. Stir to combine. Add the red wine, basil, oregano, bay leaves, and salt and pepper. Bring the sauce to a simmer. Cover and simmer for 30-45 minutes until sauce is flavorful and thickened. If the sauce appears too runny, continue to simmer for with the lid off until the sauce becomes thicker. Taste, and adjust the seasonings, as needed. A robust sauce is ideal for a flavorful lasagna.

Prepare the Béchamel Sauce:

5. In a small sauce pan, melt the butter. Whisk in the flour, and cook for 2 minutes.
6. Whisk in the whole milk, and bring to a simmer. Continue to stir until the sauce thickens. Add a pinch of nutmeg and kosher salt, to taste.

Béchamel Sauce Ingredients:

4 tablespoons butter
1/4 cup flour
4 cups whole milk
Pinch of nutmeg
Kosher salt, to taste

Pasta:

9-10 lasagna noodles, boiled for 4-5 minutes (no need to cook all the way -- the noodles will continue to cook while baking in the sauces)

Cheese:

2-3 cups freshly grated parmesan
2-3 cups mozzarella cheese

Garnish:

1 bunch fresh basil leaves, chiffonade cut for layering & garnish

Noodles:

7. Boil the noodles for half of the time listed on the package. Drain the noodles, and then plunge into an ice bath to keep them from over cooking and making them easier to handle.
8. Working quickly from the ice bath, lay the noodles in a single layer on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Separate any layers with parchment paper. Be sure that the noodles aren't touching to avoid them sticking together.

Assemble the Lasagna:

9. Spoon 1/4 cup of the Béchamel sauce in the bottom of a large roasting pan. Add a layer of the partially-cooked noodles to the bottom of the pan.
10. Add a layer of Bolognese sauce on top of the noodles. Top the Bolognese with a layer of Béchamel sauce. Sprinkle the Béchamel sauce with parmesan cheese, then top with a sprinkle of fresh basil. Add another noodle layer and keep repeating the layers until you reach within 1/2" of the top of the pan. Finish the layering process with a noodle layer generously covered with mozzarella cheese.
11. Loosely tent the lasagna with aluminum foil.

Bake the Lasagna:

12. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Bake for 45-50 minutes, or until the lasagna is hot and bubbly. Remove the aluminum foil from the top for the last 10-15 minutes. If needed, broil until the cheese is perfectly golden brown.
13. Let the lasagna set for 10-15 minutes after removing it from the oven to allow the layers to set. Garnish with fresh basil and serve hot.