

World's Best Lasagna



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Rated: ★★★★★

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Prep Time: 30 Minutes

Cook Time: 2 Hours 30 Minutes

Ready In: 3 Hours 15 Minutes

Servings: 12

"Filling and satisfying lasagna with sausage, ground beef and three types of cheese."

INGREDIENTS:

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| 1 pound sweet Italian sausage | 1/4 cup of the water from a can of black olives |
| 3/4 pound lean ground beef | 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning |
| 1/2 cup minced onion | 1 tablespoon salt |
| 2 cloves garlic, crushed | 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper |
| 1 (28 ounce) can crushed tomatoes | 4 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley <small>or 1 package of frozen spinach, drained or squeezed dry (drained, canned spinach may be used instead)</small> |
| 2 (6 ounce) cans tomato paste | 12 lasagna noodles |
| 2 (6.5 ounce) cans canned tomato sauce | 16 ounces ricotta cheese <small>or 4% small curd cottage cheese, drained</small> |
| 1/2 cup water | 1 egg <small>(a 2nd egg may be needed if spinach is used)</small> |
| 1.5 2 tablespoons white sugar | 1/2 teaspoon salt |
| 1 1/2 teaspoons dried basil leaves | 1 3/4 pound mozzarella cheese, sliced shredded or grated |
| 1/2 teaspoon fennel seeds | 3/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese <small>- flaked parmesan may also be used*</small> |
| 3 legs of star anise | |

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a Dutch oven, cook sausage, ground beef, onion, and garlic over medium heat until well browned. Stir in crushed tomatoes, tomato paste, tomato sauce, and water. Season with sugar, basil, fennel seeds, Italian seasoning, 1 tablespoon salt, pepper, anise, black olive water and 2 tablespoons parsley. Simmer, covered, for about 1 1/2 hours, stirring occasionally. Remove star anise legs after simmering. Add 1/4 tsp of baking soda if the sauce tastes too acidic (This may depend on the brand of tomatoes used) There will be extra sauce you can freeze.
2. Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Cook lasagna noodles in boiling water for 8 to 10 minutes. Drain noodles, and rinse with cold water. In a mixing bowl, combine ricotta cheese with egg, remaining parsley, and 1/2 teaspoon salt.
3. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). or dried spinach
4. 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 ~~slices~~. 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. Flaked parmesan may be used around the edges of the assembled lasagna to create a browned edge.
5. Bake in preheated oven for 25 minutes. Remove foil, and bake an additional 25 minutes. Cool for 15 minutes before serving.