



Autumn

“Yum, You’re Lovely!” Classic Bolognese Lasagna

Makes 8 servings

Fresh pasta: 1 recipe Large-Batch Egg Dough (page XX; or the Spinach variation, see page XX), cut into lasagna sheets (see page XX) that fit a 9 by 13-inch baking dish

Store-bought pasta: 12 ounces dried lasagna sheets

Bolognese

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 onion, finely diced
1 carrot, finely diced
1 fennel bulb, finely diced
2 garlic cloves, finely diced
2 anchovies
3 tablespoons tomato paste
One 28-ounce can San Marzano crushed tomatoes
1 pound ground pork
1 pound ground beef
1¼ cups chicken stock, or as needed
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
½ cup finely chopped basil leaves
½ cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
1 teaspoon kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper

I know, I know . . . the dishes, the counter space, the layering, the time . . . I get it. Baked pastas are a labor of love. But you can’t beat a lasagna made with homemade pasta. They also are an impressive, hands-off way to feed a crowd if prepared in advance. So, let’s do this. The best Bolognese lasagnas that I’ve eaten had a hint of vinegar hidden in the silky layers (so I always add a little to mine) and plenty of white sauce, which is why I use both fresh ricotta and a béchamel. A robust peppery bottle of Australian Shiraz or Chianti would round out this meal perfectly. Unbuckle your belts!

- 1 To make the Bolognese:** In a large frying pan over medium heat, warm ¼ cup of the olive oil. Add the onion, carrot, fennel, garlic, and anchovies and sauté gently until softened, about 10 minutes. Add the tomato paste and cook for a couple minutes, then add the tomatoes and cook for 5 minutes more. Remove from the heat, let cool slightly, and then pour the mixture into a large food processor or blender and pulse until smooth.
- 2** In the same frying pan over medium-high heat, warm the remaining ¼ cup olive oil. Add the pork and beef and sauté, breaking up the meat with a wooden spoon, until browned, about 10 minutes. Add the chicken stock, vinegar, tomato mixture, basil, and parsley; season with the salt and pepper; and stir to combine. Cover, turn the heat to low, and let simmer, stirring occasionally, for about 30 minutes. Add a little more stock or water if the Bolognese becomes dry. Remove from the heat.
- 3 To make the béchamel:** In a large heavy-bottomed saucepan over low heat, melt the butter. Add the flour and cook for 2 minutes, whisking constantly. Gradually whisk in the milk until smooth. When the béchamel is velvety and has the consistency of heavy cream, add the Parmigiano, salt, nutmeg, and some cranks of pepper and whisk to combine. Set aside.

Continued

Simple Pasta

Classic Tortellini en Brodo, continued

Béchamel

6 tablespoons unsalted butter
1/3 cup / 45g all-purpose flour
3 3/4 cups whole milk, warmed
1 cup finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
Freshly ground black pepper

Extra-virgin olive oil for drizzling
1 1/2 cups finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
Freshly ground black pepper
12 ounces whole-milk ricotta, strained
Basil leaves for finishing
3 tablespoons unsalted butter

- 4 Preheat the oven to 400°F.
- 5 Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Working in batches, blanch four sheets of fresh pasta at a time until just softened, for 1 to 2 minutes. (If working with store-bought lasagna sheets, cook for about 7 minutes, or according to package instructions.) Using a large spider, remove the sheets and lay them out on a lightly oiled surface (careful; they'll be hot). When cool enough to touch, unfurl the sheets and drizzle a little olive oil over them to keep them from sticking. Repeat with the remaining pasta sheets.
- 6 Butter a 9 by 13-inch baking dish, then spread with a thin layer of béchamel and Bolognese and cover with a layer of pasta. Add another layer of béchamel and Bolognese and a sprinkling of the Parmigiano and some pepper; then dot the top with tablespoons of ricotta. Repeat the layering until you have used all the ingredients, making sure to finish with béchamel, Parmigiano, and, finally, some basil. Cut the remaining butter into small pieces and scatter on top.
- 7 Bake the lasagna until the top is golden and the edges are crisp, about 30 minutes. Let it rest and compose itself for about 10 minutes before cutting and serving.

TIPS

Bolognese can be made in advance, just reheat gently before assembling since it won't spend long in the oven.

If you don't have a blender or food processor, you can skip blending the sofrito-tomato mixture in Step 2; it will still be delicious.

You could also use beef short rib (see Beef Short Rib Pappardelle, page XX) for the meat filling instead of the Bolognese.

