



White Spinach & Mushroom Lasagna

This recipe is adapted from one that appeared in Cook's Illustrated. Be sure to use Italian fontina rather than bland and rubbery Danish or American fontina. If you can't find it, substitute whole milk mozzarella. To make the cheese easier to shred, freeze it for 30 minutes to firm it up. If fresh nutmeg is unavailable, use only ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg. Because the lasagna is broiled at the end of cooking to brown the surface, make sure to use a baking dish that is broiler safe. Serves 6 to 8.

Spinach

1 Tbs. olive oil
1 (8 oz.) container white or cremini mushrooms, sliced
1 sweet onion, minced
20 ounces spinach (2 bags), stemmed and rinsed

Bechamel

5 Tbs. unsalted butter
1 Tbs. unsalted butter for baking dish
5 large shallots, minced (about 1 cup)
4 medium cloves garlic, minced or pressed through garlic press (generous 1 Tbs.)
¼ c. unbleached all-purpose flour
3½ c. whole milk
2 bay leaves
¾ tsp. fresh grated nutmeg
½ tsp. table salt
¼ tsp. ground black pepper
1 ounce grated Parmesan cheese (about ½ cup)

Cheeses and Pasta

8 ounces whole milk cottage cheese
1 large egg
¼ teaspoon table salt
12 no-boil lasagna noodles from 1 box
2 ounces grated Parmesan cheese (about 1 c.)
8 ounces Italian fontina cheese, shredded (about 2 c.)

Sauté veggies. Heat oil in a large sauté pan set over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms, sauté until lightly browned, about 3 minutes. Add chopped onion, sweat for another 3 minutes. Add the spinach in batches, adding more as the spinach shrivels and wilts. Sauté for a few more minutes to completely wilt the spinach.

THE
KITCHEN BITCH



Season the veggie mixture to taste with salt and pepper. Separate the veggies from any excess liquid in the pan, pressing on the spinach to release some of the liquid. Set the veggies aside in another bowl.

Make the béchamel sauce. Melt 5 tablespoons butter until foaming in medium saucepan over medium heat; add shallots and garlic and cook, stirring frequently, until translucent, about 4 minutes. Add flour and cook, stirring constantly, for about 1 1/2 minutes. Do not brown. Gradually whisk in milk. Bring mixture to boil over medium-high heat, whisk in bay leaves, nutmeg, salt, and pepper. Reduce heat to low and simmer 10 minutes, whisking occasionally. Whisk in Parmesan and discard bay leaves. Transfer sauce to bowl, press plastic wrap directly against surface, and set aside.

Blend cheeses. Blend cottage cheese, egg, and salt in food processor or blender until very smooth, about 30 seconds. Transfer to bowl and set aside.

Soak noodles. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 425°F. Place noodles in 13- by 9-inch broilersafe baking dish and cover with hot tap water; let soak 5 minutes, agitating noodles occasionally to prevent sticking. Remove noodles from water and place in single layer on kitchen towel. Wipe baking dish dry and coat with remaining 1 tablespoon butter.

Layer and bake lasagna. Use rubber spatula to distribute 1/2 cup bechamel in bottom of baking dish; position 3 noodles on top of sauce. Stir spinach into remaining bechamel in bowl, mixing well to break up clumps of spinach (you should have about 4 cups spinach/bechamel mixture). Spread 1 cup spinach mixture evenly over noodles, sprinkle evenly with Parmesan, and top with 3 more noodles. Spread 1 cup spinach mixture evenly over noodles, sprinkle evenly with 1 cup fontina, and top with 3 more noodles. Spread 1 cup spinach mixture evenly over noodles, followed by cottage cheese mixture. Finish with 3 noodles, remaining cup spinach mixture, and remaining cup fontina. Lightly spray large sheet foil with nonstick cooking spray and cover lasagna. Bake until bubbling, about 20 minutes, then remove foil. Remove lasagna and adjust oven rack to uppermost position (about 6 inches from heating element) and heat broiler. Broil lasagna until cheese is spotty brown, 4 to 6 minutes. Cool 10 minutes, then cut into pieces and serve.