



Lasagna ala Melange

I called this recipe Lasagna Melange as I used an assortment of five types of cheese, two sauces and three kinds of pasta. It was not initially my intent to make anything more than regular lasagna, but as I was pulling items out of my pantry to see what I needed at the store, I saw I had basil pasta, and potato gnocchi and a lightbulb went off in my head. I had to use them in this dish.

Side Note:

Everybody has their own version of meat sauce and marinara sauce. Make your sauces if you like. This lasagna is more about the cheese variation and the pasta variation than my sauce.

For this post, the recipe is for a lasagna that will fit in a deep, 9x13 or 10x14 lasagna pan.

For the Meat Sauce

(This is a variation of my 30 Minute Bolognese Sauce from last year)

Ingredients

- 1 large yellow onion, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 - 12-ounce packages of Italian style meatballs*
- 1 teaspoon anchovy paste
- 1/2 cup Oregano
- Olive oil
- 2 can tomato paste
- 1 - 28-ounce can - San Marzano tomatoes
- 1 - 26-ounce jar - La Famiglia DelGrosso Sunday Marinara

Meat Sauce Preparation (can be done a day or two ahead of time)

Heat your 5-quart dutch oven over medium-high heat. Once the pan is hot, add a thin layer of olive oil and immediately add the diced onion and garlic. Cook until translucent. Add the meatballs and leave alone for 3-4 minutes to allow for a crispy layer to form. Roll the meatballs around until browned all most sides. At that time, use a potato masher to break up the meatballs. If you like a lot of caramelization, continue to allow the meat to brown. For this dish, I want big chunks of meat so do not smash into a mince.

While caramelizing add the teaspoon of anchovy paste. It adds an umami layer to the sauce that makes it have a much more intense flavor. It will not make the sauce taste fishy. If the meat is stuck to the bottom, don't worry but turn the heat down a bit. Do not scrape it off the pan. Just stir above the stuck portion. Now add in the cans of tomato paste and stir into the loose meat. After the paste is blended, add the jar of DelGrosso Sunday Marinara Sauce and the can of San Marzano Peeled Tomatoes juice and all. Note: You can use a cheaper brand of tomato if you like but this is a great sauce tomato.

Blend it all together. Adjust the heat to get serious bubbling action at which point turn the heat back down to a simmer. Simmer covered with a steam vent for about 25 minutes stirring at least twice in that period. If the sauce did stick to the bottom of the pan, put the lid on without the vent and allow it to steam to loosen.

Stove Top Crowded?

If you need additional burner space on your stove top, cover the sauce with the lid, and place it in a pre-heated 350-degree oven and bake for 30-40 minutes. If you make the sauce ahead of time, be sure to reheat it before you assemble the lasagna.

For the Marinara Sauce

Ingredients

2 cloves garlic, minced
1/4 cup Oregano
Olive oil
2 can tomato paste
1 - 28-ounce can - San Marzano tomatoes
1 - 26-ounce jar - La Famiglia DelGrosso Sunday Marinara

Marinara Sauce Preparation (can be done a day or two ahead of time)

Heat your 5-quart dutch oven over medium-high heat. Once the pan is hot, add a thin layer of olive oil and immediately add the garlic. Cook for about 1 minute then add in oregano and cook until fragrant. Add the can of tomatoes, the jar of Marinara and tomato paste. Stir until the paste is blended. At this point, you can also mash the whole tomatoes.

Adjust the heat to get serious bubbling action at which point turn the heat back down to a simmer. Simmer covered with a steam vent for about 30 minutes stirring periodically. Do not allow to stick to the bottom of the pan.

Remaining Ingredients

1 15 oz Whole Milk Galbani Ricotta Cheese
3 Fresh Large Eggs
1/4 cup Oregano
4 oz Shredded Parmesan Cheese

8 slices Provolone Cheese
1 16 oz Package Sliced Fresh Mozzarella Cheese
2 16 oz package Shredded Mozzarella Cheese
2 4 oz containers Shredded Parmesan Cheese
(If you think you need more cheese go for it. I always have extra just in case I need it.)

Lasagna noodles - 1 lb box
Basil Reginetti Pasta* -1 12 oz box (or other green pasta)
DeCecco Potato Gnocchi - 1 17.5 oz package

*I buy Sfoglioni NYC Pasta Shop online. They have a unique variety of shapes and seasonal flavors.

Preparation

Place the Ricotta in a large bowl, add the eggs, shredded parmesan, and the oregano and blend together. Set Aside. Boil each pasta separately according to the instructions until just "al dente." Drain and set aside. The lasagna noodles should be tossed in a bit of olive oil to keep them from sticking together as they cool.

Assembly

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Rack in the middle of the oven.

Be sure your sauces are hot, the variety of pasta is cooked, and the cheeses are at room temperature. Set everything out in the order you want to layer.

Pour a tablespoon of olive oil in your lasagna pan and grease the sides and bottom of the pan. Begin to layer. If you have a different layering order, give it a go. I just like the Reginetti in the middle somewhere, and the gnocchi should be on top covered in caramelized cheese.

Marinara Sauce - always first
Lasagna Noodles - always second
Provolone Cheese
Ricotta Cheese - use about half of the mixture on this layer
Bolognese Sauce
Lasagna Noodle
Marinara Sauce
Fresh Mozzarella Cheese
Basil Reginetti Pasta
Ricotta Cheese - It is the last layer use the rest
Bolognese Sauce
Lasagna Noodle - Probably have leftover noodles
Shredded Mozzarella
Potato Gnocchi
Marinara Sauce
Shredded Mozzarella
Shredded Parmesan

Create a tent cover with aluminum foil that has been sprayed with an olive oil spray on the inside to help keep the top cheese layer from sticking. Bake for 45 minutes. A larger pan may need longer. The sauce should be bubbling around the edges, and when you poke a hole with a knife in the center, you want to see steam or feel the heat on the knife. Remove foil and bake for another 15-20 minutes until cheese is golden brown. Remove from oven and allow to rest for 10-15 minutes before you slice and serve.

If you have leftover sauce, you can serve as a gravy for those that want extra.