

HELEN K - DMC	
LASAGNE	

2455 MD

This is so delicious – you may want to leave out the freezing idea

- A A classic Italian dish that – some claim – originated in ancient Greece! There are many versions of this comforting, golden, layered dish, all quite different, but one common ingredient.
- B That common ingredient is the signature component – Lasagne - sheet pasta. Serve with just some salad – a Greek salad, perhaps, as a nod to its possible long-ago origin. This Lasagne recipe is easy and quick to make - and it freezes well [if there's any left!] You'll never buy a ready-made Lasagne again!



- C **DESCRIPTION:**
Lasagne's a great supper dish for the family and/or guests. As I said, if there's any left, it freezes well. And on that note:

Freezing:
The best way to freeze Lasagne is to cut it into portions when cold and lift each portion onto a flat object that fits into your freezer [such as a small chopping board.] A piece of tin foil will work, alternatively.
Place the Lasagne portions carefully in the freezer. Leave for a couple of hours. When the Lasagne is firm, you can then transfer it into a freezer bag [or use two ordinary food bags, one inside the other.]
[Of course, you COULD put the portions into food containers to freeze - but I'm always short of freezer space!]

1 **METHOD:**

MEAT SAUCE:

Brown the meat in a frying pan. Transfer to a large saucepan.
Add some oil to the same frying pan and brown the onions. Add to the pan.
Briefly fry the garlic. Add to the pan.
Add the tomatoes, tomato puree, stock cubes, herbs, spices and sugar to the pan [so, all the other ingredients, except the cheese sauce ingredients].
Rinse out the tomato tins with about half a tin of water and add to the pan.
Stir well.
Simmer for about an hour, stirring occasionally.

CHEESE SAUCE:

Make a *white sauce* with the milk, butter and flour.
One easy way to do this is to put all three ingredients in a small saucepan and gently heat the pan.
When the milk begins to rise, whisk constantly until the sauce becomes thick. [Don't panic if it doesn't thicken much – you don't need a thick sauce – and the cheese will thicken it anyway.]
Remove the sauce from the heat.
Grate the cheese and add to the sauce [if you don't have a grater, chop the cheese into small pieces.]
Leave the sauce to stand to let the cheese melt.
When the meat sauce is nearly ready, heat the cheese sauce gently, stirring all the time, to finish melting the cheese. The sauce should be smooth now.
Add a sprinkle of cayenne pepper and ground nutmeg to the cheese sauce.

2 **BUILDING THE LASAGNE:**

Pour a thin layer of meat mixture into the two dishes [just enough to cover the base of the dishes].
Place sheets of Lasagne on top. If using a 30 x 20cm dish, 4 sheets will fit.
Break the pasta to fill gaps – but don't cover the whole dish with pasta.
Pour the rest of the meat mixture on top.
Place a second layer of Lasagne sheets on top of that. I put the second layer at right angles to the first layer.
Pour the cheese sauce over the top, covering the pasta as much as possible.

3 **BAKING:**

Bake at Gas Mark 5 - about 5 mins, until the top is golden and the pasta soft.
I suggest swopping the two dishes over in the oven halfway through – moving the top one down and the bottom one up - to share the heat.
NOTE: If cooking one Lasagne at a time [or making half the quantity], it will cook in about 40 minutes.

D **MAKES /SERVES:**

12 portions

E **INGREDIENTS:**

MEAT SAUCE:

Oil for frying

750g minced lamb or beef [ideally, lean, 5% fat]
3 large onions, sliced
4 cloves garlic, chopped
2 tins tomatoes OR 34 fresh baby tomatoes
0.5 tube of tomato puree
2 bay leaves
Big shake of dried oregano
Big shake of dried basil
Pinch of ground cinnamon
Pinch of ground nutmeg
2 veg stock cubes [I like "green" [veg] Oxo cubes]
Pinch of sugar [brown or white]

CHEESE SAUCE:

1 litre milk
Flour: 1.5oz
Butter: 1.5oz
About 175g mature Cheddar
Pinch of ground nutmeg
Pinch of cayenne pepper

Dried Lasagne [sheet pasta]:
16-18 sheets
[any variety of Lasagne]

F **SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:**

Pyrex dishes: 2
[30 x 20cm is an ideal size]
Large saucepan
Small saucepan
Frying pan
Whisk
Cheese grater [ideal but not essential]

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