

# Lasagna al Forno

This is a Napa Valley translation of the Tuscan classic. Kim Frazier has made this recipe her own and in doing so has created an overwhelmingly satisfyingly delicious dish. This dish pairs so amazingly well with a full bodied red that you may have a hard time ever broiling another steak to pair with Cabernet or Merlot. Although there is a fair amount of prep time (a few hours is invested into this dish) it is worth it! One hint to success, do not skimp on the quality of the wine as this does influence the outcome of the dish.

## Meat Sauce Ingredients

1 oz butter  
1 white onion, finely chopped  
1 small carrot, finely chopped  
½ celery stalk, finely chopped  
1 garlic clove, crushed  
5 oz pancetta, sliced  
1 lb 4 oz ground beef  
¼ teaspoon dried oregano  
Pinch nutmeg  
1/3 cup dry vermouth or dry white wine  
12 oz beef stock  
1 tablespoon tomato paste  
2 tablespoons heavy cream (half and half also works well)  
1 egg beaten  
1 cup Frazier 2005 Merlot

## Béchamel Sauce Ingredients

2.5 oz butter  
1.5 oz plain all purpose flour  
Pinch of grated nutmeg  
2.5 cups milk  
1 bay leaf  
½ cup heavy cream (half and half is a great lower fat alternative)

6 sheets no-boil lasagna noodles *or* fresh lasagna noodles - sized to fit dish  
5.5 oz grated mozzarella cheese  
2.25 oz grated parmesan cheese

### Meat sauce:

Heat the butter in a frying pan and add the vegetables, garlic, and pancetta. Cook over a moderately low heat for 5-6 minutes, or until just softened. Add the beef and increase the heat to medium, cook for 8 minutes or just before the beef begins to brown. Stir beef to break up lumps and add the oregano and nutmeg.

Pour in vermouth/white wine and increase heat ever so slightly reducing most of liquid. Pour in beef stock, tomato paste and red wine, simmer for 2 hours. Add a little hot water if needed, so as to keep mixture moist but towards the end all liquid should be absorbed. Stir in the cream, remove from heat and let cool for 15 minutes. Stir in the egg.

### Béchamel Sauce:

Heat butter in a saucepan over low heat. Add the flour and nutmeg, cook, stirring for 1 minute. Remove from the heat and gradually stir in the milk. Add the bay leaf, return to the heat and simmer, stirring often until the sauce thickens. Season the sauce with salt & pepper. Cover with plastic wrap (to prevent a skin from forming on top) and cool. Remove and discard the bay leaf.

Next put the béchamel in a saucepan, heat gently and stir in cream. Remove from heat and cool slightly. Preheat oven to 350° and grease an 8 ½ x 6 ½ ovenproof dish.

### Pasta:

If using fresh pasta, cook until al dente and with a slotted spoon carefully scoop out lasagna noodles and place in a bowl of cold water. Once cooled remove the pasta and dry on clean kitchen towels, next trim pasta to fit dish.

Spread half of the meat sauce in a dish. Scatter with half of the mozzarella then cover with a slightly overlapping layer of pasta sheets. Spread half the béchamel over this and sprinkle with the parmesan cheese. Repeat the layers, finishing with a layer of béchamel and parmesan.

Bake for 40 minutes, if using fresh lasagna noodles, until golden brown. If using no boil lasagna noodles increase baking time to 45-50 minutes. Leave to rest for 10 minutes before serving.