

Zoe's cheesy lasagna with spinach and ricotta

*serves 6 - 8

Ingredients

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| 500g beef mince (lean or regular) | 400g ricotta cheese (from the deli, full fat) |
| 1 large onion, diced | Big handful chopped fresh (or dried) oregano |
| 3-4 cloves garlic, finely diced | Plain flour & butter (for cheese sauce) |
| 300g carrot, finely chopped | 2 cups milk |
| 500g mushrooms | 250g grated cheese |
| 800g tin tomatoes | 250g packet instant lasagna sheets |
| 280g bag baby spinach | Extra virgin olive oil |

Method

Step 1: Turn oven to 180°C. Heat 4 tbls olive oil in large cooking pot, add the onion and cook for 3-4 minutes, then add the garlic and oregano and cook further minute before adding the mince. Allow mince to cook for 8-10 minutes on medium heat until nicely browning, add as much salt and pepper as you like to taste. Add the carrots and mushrooms and leave cooking on medium heat for another 10 minutes or so, before adding the tomato, leave to cook for 30 minutes to an hour. You can also add a splash or so of red wine vinegar or red wine to add flavour to the sauce to your liking.

Step 2: Blanch spinach by placing in a large pot of boiling water, leave for a few minutes and then drain. Rinse with cold water and then squeeze out excess water once cool enough and roughly chop. Mix chopped spinach with ricotta cheese, 1 clove garlic (raw) and 1 tbls olive oil, and a little salt and pepper.

Step 3: To make cheese sauce, melt 50g butter in a small saucepan over a medium heat. Add 2 heaped tbls flour and cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly (it should be a thickish paste). Reduce heat and gradually add milk, stirring after each addition to ensure a smooth consistency. I usually take it off the heat every so often to avoid heating too fast. Once all the milk is added, increase the heat and cook for about 5 minutes, stirring continually until just before sauce boils. Reduce heat again and stir until sauce thickens, add most of the grated cheese (keep enough to sprinkle on top) and stir until smooth.

Step 4: Cover bottom of an oven-proof baking dish with 1/2 of the meat sauce, a layer of lasagna sheets and 1/3 of the cheese sauce. Add the rest of the meat sauce, another layer of lasagna and another 1/3 of the cheese sauce. Then add a layer of the spinach and ricotta mix, one final layer a lasagna and top with the remaining cheese sauce. Sprinkle with the remaining grated cheese and bake for 30-40 minutes or until golden brown. Serve on its own or with a salad & ENJOY!

