

VEGAN & GLUTEN FREE LASAGNE W/ A TOFU & SPINACH FILLING

Serves: 6

Prep: 60-90 mins

Cooking Time: 30 mins (*Dependent upon type of pasta)

Cooling Time: 5-10mins

Type: Main Meal

Tools: Chopping board, sharp knife, non-stick pots (*3) and a frying pan, frying spatula, food processor, measuring cups, silicone spatula, mixing bowl, casserole dish

Courtesy of: Eat2Health Blog



FreeFrom lasagne: this is a delicious and stodgy meal that the whole family can enjoy! A typical 'standard' lasagne can be very rich due to its meat, cheese(s) and milk content, consequently containing a fair bit of salt and fat from the cheese(s) and/or sauce. Ours however is completely plant-based with no added sugar, making it lower in saturated fats, salt and sugar as a result, but still very delicious right up until the last bite!

Ingredients

Tomato Sauce		Filling Mixture		White Sauce		Pasta
200g	White Onion	400g	Frozen Spinach	300ml	Soya Milk (unsweetened & fortified)	400g GF Lasagne Sheets
6g	Garlic Clove (1 fat one!)	2pkgs	Silken Tofu (698g)			
30g	Black Spanish Olives	6g	Garlic Clove	4g	Herb Blend (1g of each: dried thyme, basil & oregano)	
20g	Fresh Basil	130g	Chestnut Mushrooms			
	Low-Fat Cooking Oil		Low-Fat Cooking Oil	1g	Onion Powder	
800g	Tinned Plum Tomatoes (no added salt)	40g	Pine Nuts	20g	Vegan Margarine	
40g	Tomato Puree	1g	Ground Nutmeg	20g	Plain GF Flour	
1 tsp	Lemon juice				Salt & Black pepper	
4g	Herb Blend (1g of each: dried thyme, basil & oregano)					
1g	Onion Powder					
	Salt & Black Pepper					

Directions

1. Place the spinach into a microwavable bowl. Defrost in the microwave. Drain in a sieve. NB: Ours took about 14 mins to defrost.
2. In the meantime, peel and chop the onion. Peel and dice the garlic. Wash and drain the olives (if they were in brine), remove any stones (if necessary) and then chop them into slices. Wash and dry the basil, remove its leaves from its stem and roughly them (save a few whole pieces for garnishing).
3. Prepare the tomato sauce. Heat a large, non-stick saucepan over a medium-low heat. Add some low-fat cooking spray. Add the garlic and onions. Cover and gently fry for 1-2 mins or until softened, stirring occasionally.

4. Add 30g olives, 800g tinned tomatoes, 40g puree, 1 tsp lemon juice, the herb blend (dried thyme, basil & oregano) and the onion powder. Season it with some salt and pepper to taste. Stir together. Bring to a light boil. Reduce the heat. Cover and simmer for 5 mins. Leave the lid slightly ajar for the remaining cooking time; allow the sauce to simmer for a further 20 mins, stirring occasionally. Season as necessary. Add the fresh basil. Stir through. Turn off the heat and leave it covered.
5. In the meantime, prepare the filling. Open and drain the tofu. **Tip:** *Speedy, silken tofu! This type of tofu does not have to be pressed like standard firm tofu!* Peel and dice the garlic. Wash, dry and dice the mushrooms. *Drain your spinach if you haven't already.
6. Meanwhile, prepare your filling. Place a non-stick frying pan or wok over a medium-low heat. Add some low-fat cooking oil. Add the garlic and mushrooms. Gently fry for 1-2 mins. Add the spinach and 40g pine nuts. Stir together. Allow it to fry for a further 2-3 minutes. Add the nutmeg. Season it with salt and pepper. Stir together. Remove from the heat. In the meantime, place the tofu into a food processor. Blend until smooth and creamy. Transfer it into a large mixing bowl. Add the spinach mixture. Season it with some salt and pepper to taste. Stir and thoroughly combine.
7. Meanwhile, heat the oven to 200°C/400°F. **Tip:** *Check your pasta's baking instructions, as you might need a slightly higher temperature than this.* Cook the pasta according to the packet instructions. Drain. NB: We pre-cooked ours for 3 mins in boiling water and then drained it.
8. Prepare the white sauce. Add 300ml milk, the herb blend (dried thyme, basil & oregano) and onion powder into a large measuring jug. Stir to combine. Place 20g DF margarine into a small, non-stick saucepan over a medium-low heat. Allow it to melt (be careful to not let it burn). Once the margarine has melted, add 20g GF flour. Whisk to thoroughly combine and form a 'roux'. Keep stirring for about 30 seconds or so to help remove some of the floury taste from the sauce. Gradually pour in the milk mixture. Whisk together.

Keeping whisking until the sauce thickens. NB: This can take 3-6 mins, depending on how high your heat setting is; do not allow it to burn! Remove from the heat. Season it with some salt and pepper to taste. Leave covered until ready to use.

9. Assemble the lasagne!
 1. Pour just over half of the quantity of the tomato sauce into the casserole dish. Add a layer of prepared lasagne sheets.
 2. Add half of the filling mixture. Spread evenly over the pasta.
 3. Add another of lasagne sheets, followed by the remaining filling mixture.
 4. Place one more layer of lasagne sheets. Pour over the remaining tomato sauce.
 5. Give the white sauce a quick whisk. Pour and spread it over the top of the lasagne. **Tip:** If necessary, use a silicone spatula help spread it.
 6. Place it on the middle oven shelf. Bake for 20-30 mins, or until it's bubbling, lightly browned and the pasta is cooked. **Tip:** *Ours took 30 mins in a fan-assisted oven. It will definitely take less time than this if you are using 'fully cooked' or quick cook pasta!*
 7. Remove the dish from the oven.
10. Allow it to cool for 5-10 mins. **Tip:** *This will make it slightly easier to cut and serve!* Garnish with the reserved basil (if using). Serve warm alongside a green salad or green beans if desired.

Notes:

- Use wholemeal or spelt-based pasta if you are not concerned about gluten.
- Use fresh spinach and tomatoes instead.
- Alternatively, make some home-made ravioli using this filling and serve it topped with the tomato sauce.
- Serve the tomato sauce with some spaghetti instead (garnish with some pine nuts); serve with a garden salad for a quick and simple meal!
- Adjust the herb combinations to your personal preference.
- Make two lasagnes and freeze one for next week! Alternatively, freeze individual portions and defrost/reheat when you are short on time to cook a nutritious meal!
- Instead of pine nuts, try using sunflower seeds? (The latter is normally cheaper for us).
- Use a low-sodium/sugar/fat store-bought tomato sauce or passata if you short on time!

Recipe inspired from: BBC Good Foods