

EGGPLANT LASAGNA

Susan Denzer, Chef and Culinary Consultant
Love + Craft Kitchen
www.loveandcraftkitchen.com

Eggplant makes a great stand-in for pasta and is every bit as satisfying while providing a delicious gluten-free, "amped-up" nutrient option.



Photo: Love + Craft Kitchen

Making lasagna requires a bit of time but can be made ahead - either up to the point of baking or fully baked - then refrigerated or frozen for later use making it a great choice for gatherings or weeknight meals. Use your favorite red pasta sauce with or without meat. Adding sautéed mushrooms, spinach or kale and diced zucchini and/or root vegetables to the sauce in place of meat makes a terrific vegetarian version.

Makes: 1 - 8x11" pan

INGREDIENTS:

2 medium eggplants
1 - 2 tablespoons avocado oil
2 - 3 tablespoons Kosher salt
2 ¼ cups red pasta sauce of your choice, with meat or vegetarian
1 ½ cups cottage cheese
1 large egg
1 ½ cups shredded Italian Blend cheese
Optional garnish - fresh basil, oregano, or marjoram leaves

DIRECTIONS:

Sweat and Roast the Eggplant

1. Wash and dry eggplants. Slice off the stem end, then slice the eggplant into long strips, about ¼ inch thick. Lay the slices on paper towels, and sprinkle Kosher salt over top. Let sit for 30 minutes ("sweat" process).
2. Preheat oven to 425°F. Line a large cookie sheet with parchment paper or foil AND spray with cooking spray. Set aside.
3. Rinse the salt off of the eggplant slices and pat dry. Lay the slices in a single layer on the prepared cookie sheet. Place in the oven and roast for 18 - 20 minutes, until just starting to soften and lightly brown.

Make Sauce

While the eggplant is sweating and roasting, prepare your favorite red sauce with meat or vegetables. Allow to cool before assembling lasagna.

Assemble Lasagna

1. Once the eggplant is finished roasting, lower the oven heat to 375°F. Spray an 8" x 11" baking dish (with sides) with cooking spray.
2. In a medium-sized mixing bowl, combine the cottage cheese with the egg. Set aside.

3. Spread approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the red pasta sauce on the bottom of the baking dish. Layer each of the following in this order in the baking dish on top of that sauce:

- half of the eggplant slices
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of sauce
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup cottage cheese mixture
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup shredded cheese

Repeat in the same order to form 2 layers.

4. Place baking dish in oven, uncovered, and bake for 20 - 25 minutes, until sauce is bubbling around the edges and cheese is very melted on top. Remove from oven and let stand for 10 - 15 minutes before slicing. Garnish with fresh basil, oregano and/or marjoram leaves, if desired.

Cool any left-overs completely before covering to refrigerate or freeze.