
Vegetarian rainbow lasagna

January 5, 2011

Serves 6

The words fresh and light are rarely used to describe lasagna, but this vegetable pasta dish is all that. It is delicate, and with so many fresh vegetables, as colorful as its name implies. The lasagna comes together with a white sauce instead of tomato and has enough cheese to give it plenty of flavor without being excessive. Slice the vegetables thinly and salt them for 30 minutes before assembling them. That softens the vegetables and extracts excess moisture, which eliminates the need to cook them in advance. It also draws off potential bitterness from the eggplant. The dish is pretty and nice enough to serve guests.

Vegetable oil (for the pan)

1

small eggplant, sliced lengthwise into 1/4-inch thick slices

2

medium summer squash, halved crosswise, then sliced lengthwise into 1/4-inch thick slices

2

medium zucchini, halved crosswise, then sliced lengthwise into 1/4-inch thick slices

Salt and black pepper, to taste

4

tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter

6

tablespoons flour

3

cups milk, heated until hot

1

large orange or yellow bell pepper, cored and thinly sliced

1

cup (8 ounces) ricotta

1

cup grated Parmesan

1/2

package (about 8) no-boil lasagna noodles

2

large tomatoes, sliced

1. Lightly oil a 9-by-13-inch baking dish.
2. In a colander, sprinkle the eggplant, summer squash, and zucchini slices lightly with salt. Set the colander over a bowl; drain for about 30 minutes.
3. In a saucepan over medium heat, melt the butter. Stir in the flour and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and gradually whisk in the milk until the mixture is smooth. Add salt and black pepper to taste. Return the pan to the heat. Bring the sauce to a boil, stirring constantly. Let the mixture simmer, stirring often, for 3 more minutes.
4. Set the oven at 375 degrees.
5. Rinse the eggplant, squash, and zucchini. Dry with paper towels.

6. Spread a spoonful of sauce in the baking dish. Add the bell peppers and eggplant. Add dollops of white sauce, heaping teaspoons of ricotta, and 3 tablespoons of Parmesan. Cover with 4 lasagna noodles. Spread half the remaining white sauce on top.
7. Add a layer of yellow squash, the tomatoes, 4 more lasagna noodles, the zucchini, and the remaining white sauce, spreading it to cover the top. Sprinkle with the remaining Parmesan.
8. Bake for 60 to 70 minutes or until golden brown. Let the lasagna rest for 10 minutes before cutting into squares.

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