



## THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES

A FOOD BLOG

### **Slow Cooker Spinach Mushroom Lasagna** (adapted from Cook's Illustrated's *Slow Cooker Revolution*)

Serves 6 to 8

I did not line the slow cooker with foil, because it seems so wasteful. Individual slices of lasagna were still surprisingly easy to serve intact, although the first one was messy.

I used half this amount of cheese. I'm sure the full amount is great, but I was trying to lighten it up a bit.

I was in a hurry and did not want to slice a pound and a half of mushrooms, so I pulsed them in the food processor. I also used the food processor to chop the onion, grind the Parmesan, and shred the mozzarella (in that order).

nonstick spray  
8 curly-edged lasagna noodles (7 ounces)  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
1 onion, chopped fine  
1½ pounds white mushrooms, trimmed and sliced thin  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
16 ounces fresh baby spinach  
1 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes  
1 (15-ounce) container ricotta cheese  
1¼ cups (2½ ounces) grated Parmesan cheese  
½ cup minced fresh basil  
1 large egg  
4 cups (1 pound) shredded mozzarella cheese

1. Line the slow cooker with an aluminum foil collar: Layer and fold sheets of heavy-duty foil until you have a six-layered rectangle that measures 16 by 4 inches. Press the collar into the back side of the slow cooker insert. Fit two more large sheets of foil into the slow cooker, perpendicular to each other, with the extra hanging over the edges of the cooker for a sling to help remove the lasagna later.

2. Bring 4 quarts water to a boil in a large pot. Add the broken lasagna noodles and 1 tablespoon salt and cook, stirring often, until the noodles are al dente. Drain the noodles, rinse them under cold water until cool, then spread them out in single layer over clean kitchen towels, cut in half cross-wise, and let dry. (Do not use paper towels; they will stick to the noodles.)

3. In the same pot (no need to wash), heat the oil over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add the mushrooms, garlic, and ½ teaspoon salt, cover, and cook until the mushrooms are softened, about 5 minutes. Uncover, add the onions, and continue to cook until the mushrooms are dry and browned, 5 to 10 minutes longer. Stir in the spinach, cover, and cook until wilted, about 2 minutes. Stir in the crushed tomatoes.

4. In a bowl, mix the ricotta, 1 cup (2 ounces) Parmesan, basil, egg, ½ teaspoon salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper together.

5. Spread  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the mushroom-spinach sauce into the prepared slow cooker. Arrange 4 lasagna noodle pieces in the slow cooker, overlapping if necessary, then dollop 9 rounded tablespoons of ricotta mixture over noodles. Sprinkle with 1 cup mozzarella, then spoon 1 cup more mushroom-spinach sauce over top. Repeat the layering of lasagna noodles, ricotta mixture, mozzarella and mushroom-spinach sauce twice more. For the final layer, arrange the remaining 4 noodles in the slow cooker, then top with the remaining mushroom-spinach sauce and sprinkle with the remaining mozzarella and remaining Parmesan.

6. Cover and cook until the lasagna is heated through, about 4 hours on low. Let the lasagna cool for 20 minutes. Using the sling, transfer the lasagna to a serving platter and serve.