

THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES



Vegetable Lasagna (from Cook's Illustrated)

I bought three of each of the eggplant, zucchini, and summer squash, but two of each would be plenty. And if you decide to substitute mushrooms for the eggplant, like I will in the future, skip the microwaving step and just sauté them separately from the squashes until they soften, release their water, dry out, and brown.

No-Cook Tomato Sauce:

- 1 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes
- ¼ cup chopped fresh basil
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes

No-Cook Cream Sauce:

- 4 ounces Parmesan cheese, grated (2 cups)
- 1 cup whole-milk cottage cheese
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper

Vegetable Filling:

- 1½ pounds eggplant, peeled and cut into ½-inch cubes (about 7 cups)
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- 1 pound zucchini, cut into ½-inch pieces (about 4 cups)
- 1 pound yellow squash, cut into ½-inch pieces (about 4 cups)
- 5 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil
- 2 garlic clove, minced
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh thyme
- 12 ounces baby spinach (about 12 cups)
- 12 no-boil lasagna noodles
- 12 ounces low-moisture whole-milk mozzarella cheese, shredded (about 3 cups)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil

1. FOR THE TOMATO SAUCE: Whisk all ingredients together in bowl; set aside.

2. FOR THE CREAM SAUCE: Whisk all ingredients together in bowl; set aside.

3. FOR THE FILLING: Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 375 degrees. Toss eggplant with 1 teaspoon salt in large bowl. Line surface of large plate with double layer of coffee filters and lightly spray with vegetable oil spray. Spread eggplant in even layer over filters. Wipe out and reserve now-empty bowl. Microwave eggplant, uncovered, until dry to touch and slightly shriveled, about 10 minutes, tossing once halfway through to ensure that eggplant cooks evenly. Let cool slightly. Return eggplant to bowl and toss with zucchini and squash.

4. Combine 1 tablespoon oil, garlic, and thyme in small bowl. Heat 2 tablespoons oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add half eggplant mixture, ¼ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper; cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are lightly browned, about 7 minutes. Push vegetables to sides of skillet; add half of garlic mixture to clearing and cook, mashing with spatula, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir to combine garlic mixture with vegetables and transfer to medium bowl. Repeat with remaining eggplant mixture, 2 tablespoons oil, and remaining garlic mixture.

5. Return skillet to medium-high heat, add remaining teaspoon oil, and heat until shimmering. Add spinach and cook, stirring frequently, until wilted, about 3 minutes. Transfer spinach to paper towel-lined plate and drain 2 minutes. Stir into eggplant mixture.

6. TO ASSEMBLE: Spray 13 by 9-inch baking dish with vegetable oil spray. Spread 1 cup tomato sauce in bottom of baking dish; shingle 4 noodles on top of sauce. Spread half of vegetable mixture over noodles, half of cream sauce, and 1 cup of mozzarella. Repeat layering with 4 noodles, 1 cup tomato sauce, remaining vegetables, remaining cream sauce, and 1 cup mozzarella. Place remaining 4 noodles on top layer of cheese. Spread remaining 1 cup tomato sauce over noodles and sprinkle with remaining 1 cup mozzarella. Lightly spray large sheet of aluminum foil with vegetable oil spray and cover lasagna. Bake until bubbling, about 35 minutes. Cool on wire rack 25 minutes. Cut into pieces, sprinkle with basil, and serve.