RECIPE

Beef and Cheese Lasagna

A big-pan beef, lentil and cheese lasagna for a winter dinner that cuts clean after a rest and freezes in squares. Lean beef and lentils share the sauce, with part-skim cheeses; about 3.8 g saturated fat and 275 mg sodium a square.

MAKES

12 servings US Metric

TOTAL

2 h 10 min

Ingredients

- [ ] 6 oz ground beef (95% lean)
- [ ] 1 ½ cups cooked brown lentils, unsalted
- [ ] 1 medium onion, chopped
- [ ] ¾ tsp garlic powder
- [ ] 1 tbsp olive oil
- [ ] 1 jar (24 oz) low-sodium marinara sauce
- [ ] 1 can (8 oz) no-salt-added tomato sauce
- [ ] 2 tsp dried oregano
- [ ] ½ tsp salt
- [ ] ¼ tsp black pepper
- [ ] 1 cup water
- [ ] 12 oz part-skim ricotta cheese (1½ cups)
- [ ] 1 large egg

Method

1. Heat the oil in a Dutch oven or wide pot over medium-high. Cook the beef and onion, breaking the meat up, until no pink is left, about 8 minutes. Ground beef is safe at 160 °F. Spoon off any extra fat and discard it, add the garlic powder and stir for 30 seconds.

2. Stir in the lentils, marinara, tomato sauce, oregano, ½ tsp salt, pepper and the water. Simmer uncovered for 20 to 25 minutes, stirring now and then, until it coats a spoon. The water is on purpose: the dry noodles drink it as they bake. If your whole-wheat noodles are the kind you boil, leave the water out, and boil and drain them 2 minutes short of the box time while the sauce simmers.

3. Heat the oven to 375 °F and set a rack in the middle. Stir the ricotta, egg, parsley and spinach together in a bowl.

- [ ] ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley
- [ ] 1 package (10 oz) frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
- [ ] 6 oz shredded part-skim mozzarella (about 1½ cups)
- [ ] 9 whole-wheat lasagna noodles, oven-ready if you can find them

4. Spread 1 cup of the sauce in a 9×13 dish. Lay 3 noodles on it with a little gap between them. Spread half the ricotta mix over the noodles, scatter ½ cup of mozzarella over it and spoon on 1½ cups of sauce.

5. Repeat once more: 3 noodles, the rest of the ricotta mix, ½ cup of mozzarella, 1½ cups of sauce. Finish with the last 3 noodles, then spread all the remaining sauce over them, right to the corners, so no dry noodle shows. Top with the last ½ cup of mozzarella.

6. Cover the dish tightly with foil (spray the underside so the cheese does not stick). Bake 45 minutes. Take the foil off and bake 15 minutes more, until the cheese is browned in spots, the sauce bubbles at the edges and the center reads at least 160 °F.

7. Rest the lasagna 20 minutes before cutting; it will not slump. Cut into 12 squares.

8. Cool leftovers and get them into the fridge or freezer within 2 hours. Reheat a square, covered, until it reads 165 °F inside: 2 minutes in the microwave, or 12 minutes in the air fryer at 325 °F under foil.