

Recipes from *The Silver Spoon*

MAKE YOUR OWN AUTHENTIC BOLOGNESE MEAL AT HOME

Lasagna Bolognese (*lasagne alla bolognese*)

Serves 4

3 tbs. olive oil
1 carrot, chopped
1 onion, chopped
2-3/4 cups ground meat
scant 1/2 cup dry white wine
generous 1 cup bottled strained tomatoes
2 tbs. butter, plus extra for greasing
*1 quantity fresh pasta dough
**1 quantity béchamel sauce
scant 1 cup Parmesan cheese, freshly grated
salt and pepper

Heat the olive oil in a pan, add the carrot and onion, and cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, for five minutes. Add the meat and cook until browned, then pour in the wine and cook until it has evaporated. Season with salt, add the strained tomatoes and simmer for 30 minutes, then season with pepper. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Grease an ovenproof dish with butter. Roll out the pasta dough into a sheet. Cut into 4-inch squares and cook, a few at a time, in plenty of lightly salted boiling water for a few minutes. Drain and place on a damp dish towel. Arrange a layer of pasta at the bottom of the prepared dish, spoon on some of the meat sauce, then some of the béchamel sauce on top; sprinkle with some of the Parmesan and dot with some of the butter. Repeat the alternating layers until all the ingredients have been used, ending with a layer of béchamel sauce. Bake for 30 minutes.

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*Fresh Pasta Dough (*pasta all'uovo*)

Serves 4

1-3/4 cups all-purpose flour, plus extra for dusting
2 eggs, lightly beaten
salt

Sift the flour and a pinch of salt into a mound on the counter. Make a well in the center and add the eggs. Using your fingers, gradually incorporate the flour, then knead for about 10 minutes. If the mixture is too soft, add a little extra flour; if it is too firm, add a little water. Shape the dough into a ball and let rest for 15 minutes. Roll out onto a lightly floured surface or use a pasta machine to make a thin sheet, and cut out tagliatelle, lasagne, etc.

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****Béchamel Sauce (*beschiamella*)**

Serves 4

1/4 cup butter
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
2-1/4 cup milk
pinch of freshly grated nutmeg (optional)
salt and pepper

Melt the butter in a pan over medium heat. Whisk in the flour. Pour in all the milk, whisking constantly until it starts to boil. Season with salt, lower the heat, cover, and simmer gently, stirring occasionally, for at least 20 minutes. Béchamel sauce should not taste floury. Remove the pan from the heat. Taste, add salt if necessary, and season with pepper and/or nutmeg. If the sauce is too thick, add a little more milk. If too runny, return to the heat and add a pat of butter mixed with an equal quantity of all-purpose flour. Making this delicious sauce, considered a basic sauce because of the numerous variations to which it has given rise, is an essential skill for anyone keen to cook. For a richer béchamel sauce, replace half the milk with the same amount of heavy cream; for a lighter béchamel sauce, add half milk and half water.

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Parmesan Asparagus (*asparagi alla parmigiana*)

Serves 4

2 1/2 lbs. asparagus spears, trimmed
1 cup Parmesan cheese, freshly grated
2 tbs. butter
salt

Cook the asparagus in salted, boiling water for 15 minutes. Drain and pat dry gently. Arrange on warm serving dish with spears pointing inwards. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Melt the butter, season with a little salt, and pour onto the asparagus. Serve immediately.

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