

LASAGNA LOAF

If you're like me, sometimes the bargains at Costco are just too much to pass up. The other day I bought an enormous container of ricotta and a one-pound brick of mozzarella with hopes of making a big pan of lasagna. But the party plans fizzled out and as much as I like lasagna, eating twelve portions over the course of the next week didn't seem like the healthiest of ideas. And don't tell me to freeze it unless you can find some space in my freezer.

Speaking of my freezer, way in the back I noticed a container of turkey Bolognese I had made last month. Light bulb! Since it's just my husband and me, I thought I'd make a quickie mini-loaf of lasagna. It took me half the time as my usual from scratch lasagna, but it 's equally delicious.

INGREDIENTS (Serves 4)

1/2-pound oven ready lasagna noodles

2 cups leftover turkey Bolognese, heated (or your favorite jarred meat sauce)

2 cups mozzarella cheese (grated, large holes)

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup Parmesan cheese (grated, small holes)

1 tablespoon butter

FOR BECHAMEL

2 tablespoons butter

2 tablespoons flour

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of milk (warm)

Grated nutmeg

Salt & pepper

FOR RICOTTA MIXTURE

2 cups ricotta

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup Parmesan cheese (grated, small holes)

1 tablespoon fresh oregano (chopped)

1 tablespoon fresh basil (chopped)

1 teaspoon garlic powder

1 teaspoon red pepper flakes

Salt and pepper

PREPARATION

FOR BECHAMEL

In a saucepan, melt butter until it starts to foam. Add flour and whisk for two minutes until sandy colored, but not brown. Slowly pour in milk and whisk until it starts to lightly boil. Lower flame to simmer for eight minutes to thicken, whisking often. Turn off heat, season with pinch of grated nutmeg, salt and pepper, and set aside. If film forms on top, remove before using.

FOR RICOTTA MIXTURE

In a medium sized bowl, mix the ricotta, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Parmesan, oregano, basil, garlic powder, and red pepper flakes. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Set aside.

FOR ASSEMBLY

Preheat oven to 350°. Butter a large loaf pan. Spread $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of béchamel on bottom of pan making sure the entire bottom is covered. Place a layer of lasagna noodles on top. (NOTE: Since lasagna noodles are oven ready and not pre-cooked, they need

moisture from the béchamel and sauce to soften them while the dish bakes. Always make sure the whole noodle is covered by some liquid).

Spread a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of meat sauce on top of noodle. Spoon a layer of ricotta mixture on top. Sprinkle a layer of mozzarella, followed by a layer of Parmesan.

Repeat all of above three more times.

Place loaf pan on top of cookie sheet and bake in oven for about 50 minutes.

Allow to cool on top of stove for 30 minutes before serving.