



Neapolitan Lasagna (Lasagna di Carnevale)

A traditional Neapolitan Lasagna, which might not be the same as the lasagna you're used to...

Serves: 6
Prepare: 2 Hours
Cook: 4 Hours
Difficulty: medium

Ingredients

For The Ragu Sauce

- 50g extra virgin olive oil
- 1 yellow onion
- 1 clove of garlic
- 250g [smoked bacon lardons](#)
- 500g [pork belly slices](#)
- 500g [pork ribs](#)
- 500g [boneless pork shoulder](#)
- 150ml white wine
- 3 bottles (ca. 2kg) Smooth tomato passata
- salt, black pepper and sugar to taste

For The Meatballs

- 500g [beef steak mince](#)
- 100g old or dried bread
- 1 medium egg
- 1 clove of garlic
- 1 tsp chopped fresh parsley
- 40g pecorino romano or parmigiano
- salt and black pepper to taste
- neutral oil for frying

For The Lasagna

- 12-16 lasagne sheets
- 300g fresh mozzarella
- 250g smoked mozzarella (scamorza)
- 250g ricotta
- 80g grated parmigiano reggiano

Method

The Sauce

1. Cover the bottom of a large pot with extra virgin olive oil, add the cubed onion and a pinch of salt, and place on the hob on a low heat. When the onion has softened and has become translucent, add the minced garlic and let it cook for a minute before adding the smoked bacon lardons. Turn the heat to medium and let the lardons cook
2. Start adding your pork meat to the pot to sear it. First, add the pork belly cut into 2-inch chunks. Then add the pork shoulder cut into 2-inch cubes, and finally the ribs. Let each type of meat sear before adding the next. When all the meat is seared, add another pinch of salt and the wine, and let it cook on a high heat for a few minutes to allow the alcohol to evaporate
3. At this point, add the passata to the pot and mix well to ensure that the juices from the meat blend in with the tomato sauce. When the sauce starts to simmer, turn the heat to low and let it cook for at least 4 hours, stirring occasionally. You can add some extra salt, as well as black pepper and sugar to taste, halfway through the cooking time. The ragù is done when it has reduced by about 1/3

The Meatballs

1. This can be done once the tomato passata has been added to the meat, whilst the sauce is cooking. Cut the bread into 2-inch chunks, place in a small bowl and add some cold water. Let it soak for about 30 minutes,

- squeeze out the excess water and place in a larger bowl
2. Add the beef mince, the egg, the garlic and parsley, the grated cheese, as well as a pinch of salt and a bit of ground black pepper to the soaked bread and start mixing with your hand until all the ingredients are well combined. If the mixture feels too sticky, add a spoonful of flour or breadcrumbs to make it more manageable
 3. Roll out the mixture into small meatballs, about 1 inch in diameter. Once you're done, place the meatballs in the fridge to rest for about 30 minutes
 4. Heat up the oil in a shallow pan on a medium-high heat. When the oil is hot enough, start frying the meatballs in small batches, making sure they're nice and brown on all sides. Each batch shouldn't take longer than 2-3 minutes
 5. Place the cooked meatballs on a plate lined with kitchen paper to absorb the excess oil and set aside

The Lasagna

1. Now it's time to put together all the elements of the lasagna. Once the ragù has finished cooking, fish out all the meat using a skimmer or draining spoon, making sure you leave as much sauce as possible in the pot. You can enjoy the saucy meat with some homemade bread or with some pasta
2. Place the ricotta in a bowl and add a ladleful of ragù sauce to make it thinner and more spreadable. Make sure the mixture is well combined
3. Cut the mozzarella and the scamorza into small cubes, and grate the Parmigiano cheese
4. To build the lasagna, spread a ladleful of ragù on the bottom of a large baking tray. Add some lasagna sheets to cover the surface and spread some ricotta mixture on them. Add some meatballs, mozzarella and scamorza and then cover with ragù. Sprinkle some grated parmigiano on top and repeat a couple of times. For the last layer, add the lasagna sheets and cover with the remaining ricotta and ragù mixed together
5. Preheat the oven to 200°C. Place the lasagna in the middle shelf and cook for about 20 minutes. It's highly recommended to place some tin foil to the bottom of the oven to protect it from any sauce spilling
6. At this point, cover the lasagna with tin foil and cook for another 20-30 minutes, or until the lasagna sheets are soft (you can test this by poking the lasagna with a knife: if it goes through without any resistance, it means the lasagna is done)
7. Optional: if you like a crunchy top, add some extra scamorza and parmigiano to the top of the cooked lasagna and broil for 5 minutes or until crispy
8. Let the lasagna rest for at least one hour before serving. Or, even better, leave it to rest at room temperature overnight and enjoy the next day after heating it up in the oven for 10-15 minutes