



# LASAGNE

serves 10

## *for the Bolognese sauce*

- 2 rashers of good-quality smoked streaky bacon
- 2 medium onions
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 2 carrots
- 2 sticks of celery
- olive oil
- 2 heaped teaspoons dried oregano
- 500g good-quality lean minced beef
- 2 x 400g tins of chopped tomatoes
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- a small bunch of fresh basil

## *for the lasagne*

- 250g dried egg lasagne sheets
- 1 large ripe tomato

## *for the white sauce*

- ½ a small onion
- 500ml semi-skimmed milk
- a sprig of fresh parsley
- a pinch of nutmeg
- 6 black peppercorns
- optional: 1 bay leaf
- 35g butter
- 45g plain flour
- 70g Parmesan cheese
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

## To make the Bolognese sauce

Finely slice the bacon • Peel and finely chop the onions, garlic, carrots and celery – don't worry about technique but try and make all the veg a similar size • Place a large saucepan on a medium to high heat • Add 2 lugs of olive oil, your sliced bacon and the oregano and cook and stir until the bacon is lightly golden • Reduce the heat to medium-low and add the veg to the pan • Stir occasionally for around 15 minutes, or until softened and lightly coloured • Stir in the minced meat and the tinned tomatoes • Fill one of the empty tins with water and add to the pan • Stir in a good pinch of salt and pepper • Pick the basil leaves and place in the fridge for later • Finely chop the basil stalks and stir into the pan • Bring to the boil • Turn the heat down and simmer with a lid on and slightly askew for 1 hour, stirring every now and again • Take the lid off and cook for another 30 minutes, stirring occasionally • Keep an eye on the sauce as it cooks, and if you think it's starting to dry out, add a splash of water • Meanwhile, weigh out the ingredients for the white sauce

## To cook the pasta

Boil some water in the kettle and pour it into a large pan, then add your lasagne sheets with a drizzle of oil and blanch (slightly soften) for 3 to 4 minutes making sure they don't stick together – cook them in batches if necessary • Drain the sheets in a colander and carefully pat them dry with some kitchen paper to absorb any excess water – leave to one side until you're ready to build the lasagne

## To make the white sauce

Peel and slice half an onion • Add the onion, milk, parsley, nutmeg and black peppercorns and bay leaf (if using) to a pan on a medium heat and gently bring to the boil – keep a close eye on it as milk can boil suddenly

- Strain the milk through a sieve, discarding anything left behind
- Melt the butter in another pan on a medium-low heat
- Mix in the flour then start adding the strained milk, a ladleful at a time, stirring each lot in before adding more
- When you have a smooth white sauce, bring the whole lot to the boil then simmer for a couple of minutes
- Take off the heat and finely grate in most of the Parmesan cheese
- Mix well then season with a pinch of salt and pepper

### To finish the Bolognese sauce

Preheat the oven to 190°C/375°F/gas 5 • Remove the Bolognese sauce from the heat • Tear and stir in any larger basil leaves, keeping the smaller ones aside for later • Have a taste of the sauce, and season with a little more salt and pepper if you think it needs it

### To make the lasagne

Spoon a third of your Bolognese sauce into the bottom of an earthenware ovenproof dish (approximately 25cm by 35cm) • Follow with a layer of lasagne sheets and another third of your Bolognese sauce, then spoon over a third of your white sauce • Top with another layer of lasagne sheets • Spoon over the rest of the Bolognese sauce and another third of the white sauce • Finish with a final layer of lasagne sheets and top with the rest of the white sauce and finely grate over the remaining Parmesan • Top with some slices of tomato, scatter over the small basil leaves and drizzle with olive oil • Cover with foil, place in the preheated oven and bake for 30 minutes • After that, remove the foil and cook for a further 20 minutes until the lasagne is bubbling and golden • Serve on the table with a fresh green salad (see Simple green salad with French dressing) and let everyone help themselves









