

Cooking With Rania

KDKA Pittsburgh Today Live 1/20/2010

Lasagna of Roasted Butternut Squash

INGREDIENTS

For the squash:

- 2 large butternut squash, about 4 pounds – peeled and diced into ½ inch pieces
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh sage leaves
- 1 tablespoon Fennel and Cinnamon Spice Blend, recipe follows
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 1 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- 2 cups ricotta cheese (or a 15-ounce container)
- 1 cup freshly grated Parmesan
- 2 large eggs
- 1 pound fresh lasagna sheets (or no cook lasagna sheets)
- Extra-virgin olive oil

For the sauce:

- 2 quarts whole milk
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon sage, minced
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- ½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

To assemble the lasagna:

- Butter, for dish
- 1 pound mozzarella, grated
- 1 cup freshly grated Parmesan

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees

Line a baking sheet with parchment. In a bowl, toss the squash with the oil, sage, spice blend, and 1 teaspoon salt and fresh ground pepper. Spread the squash in a single layer on the baking sheet. Roast the squash in the oven until very soft and beginning to brown, 40 minutes, stirring once or twice. Remove the squash from the oven and puree in a food processor with fresh nutmeg.

In a large bowl, mix the squash puree, ricotta, Parmesan, eggs with salt and pepper to taste. Cover and refrigerate the mixture until ready to use.

Prepare the sauce: In a large saucepan, bring the milk to a slow simmer over medium heat. In a large pot, melt the butter over medium-low heat. Add the sage and garlic to the butter, cook for 30 seconds, then add the flour and stir. Add about 3 cups of the milk, and whisk to prevent lumps. Bring to a boil, while whisking continuously. Add the remaining milk and whisk again. Add the salt,

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Lasagna of Roasted Butternut Squash *(cont.)*

pepper, and nutmeg. Adjust the heat to low to maintain a slow simmer, and cook until the sauce coats the back of a spoon, about 5 minutes, whisking frequently. Remove the saucepan from the heat. Makes about 8 cups.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

Butter a 9 by 13-inch baking dish. Spoon a ladle of béchamel sauce into the dish and spread to coat the bottom. Place a single layer of lasagna sheets on top of the béchamel sauce. Spread some of the squash mixture evenly over the lasagna sheets and sprinkle about 2 tablespoons of mozzarella cheese and 1 tablespoon of grated Parmesan on top. Repeat this step until all ingredients are used, starting with 2 to 3 ladles of béchamel sauce for each layer. Keep building the layers until the pan is full to about 1/4-inch from the top. Finish with cheese and sauce directly over the noodles. Bake in the middle of the oven for about 1 hour. Remove the cover, and continue cooking for another 15 minutes until golden brown and bubbling. Allow lasagna to rest before slicing. Serve warm.

Serves: 8 to 10 servings

Fennel and Cinnamon Spice Blend:

- 3 tablespoons fennel seeds
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- Salt

Grind fennel with mortar and pestle. Add the cinnamon and salt and continue grinding. Or grind in spice grinder for a rough grind.