

Swiss Chard Lasagna with Ricotta and Mushroom

BY MELISSA CLARK BON APPÉTIT JANUARY 2011 Yield Makes 8 servings

Béchamel sauce:

2 1/2 cups whole milk
1 Turkish bay leaf
6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) unsalted butter
1/4 cup all purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon coarse kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon (scant) ground nutmeg
Pinch of ground cloves

Swiss chard and mushroom layers:

1 pound Swiss chard, center rib and stem cut from each leaf
4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
1 1/3 cups chopped onion
4 large garlic cloves, chopped, divided
1/4 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper
Coarse kosher salt
1 pound crimini mushrooms, sliced
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg

Lasagna:

9 7 x 3-inch lasagna noodles
Extra-virgin olive oil
1 15-ounce container whole-milk ricotta cheese (preferably organic), divided
6 ounces Italian Fontina Cheese, coarsely grated (about 1 1/2 cups packed), divided
8 tablespoons finely grated Parmesan cheese, divided

Test-kitchen tip: To test for doneness, insert the blade of a small knife deep into the center of the lasagna for 30 seconds. remove the knife and feel the blade. If it's hot, so is the lasagna.

Preparation

For béchamel sauce:

Bring milk and bay leaf to simmer in medium saucepan; remove from heat. Melt butter in heavy large saucepan over medium-low heat. Add flour and whisk to blend. Cook 2 minutes, whisking almost constantly (do not let roux brown). Gradually whisk milk with bay leaf into roux. Add 1/2 teaspoon coarse salt, nutmeg, and cloves and bring to simmer. Cook until sauce thickens enough to coat spoon, whisking often, about 3 minutes. Remove bay leaf. DO AHEAD: Béchamel sauce can be made 1 day ahead. Press plastic wrap directly onto surface and chill. Remove plastic and rewarm sauce before using, whisking to smooth.

For swiss chard and mushroom layers:

Blanch chard in large pot of boiling salted water 1 minute. Drain, pressing out all water, then chop coarsely. Heat 2 tablespoons oil in heavy medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion, half of garlic, and crushed red pepper. Sauté until onion is tender, 3 to 4 minutes. Mix in chard and season to taste with coarse salt and freshly ground black pepper. Heat remaining 2 tablespoons oil in heavy large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms and remaining garlic. Sauté until mushrooms are brown and tender, 7 to 8 minutes. Mix in nutmeg and season with coarse salt and pepper.

For lasagna:

Cook noodles in medium pot of boiling salted water until just tender but still firm to bite, stirring occasionally. Drain; arrange noodles in single layer on sheet of plastic wrap. Brush 13 x 9 x 2-inch glass baking dish with oil to coat. Spread 3 tablespoons béchamel sauce thinly over bottom of dish. Arrange 3 noodles in dish to cover bottom (2 side by side lengthwise, then 1 crosswise). Spread half of chard mixture over pasta, then half of mushrooms. Drop half of ricotta over in dollops and spread in even layer. Sprinkle with half of Fontina, then 4 tablespoons Parmesan; spread 3/4 cup béchamel over. Repeat layering with 3 noodles, remaining chard, mushrooms, ricotta, Fontina, Parmesan, and 3/4 cup béchamel. Cover with 3 noodles and remaining béchamel. DO AHEAD: Can be made 2 hours ahead. Cover with foil. Let stand at room temperature. Preheat oven to 400°F. Bake lasagna covered 30 minutes. Uncover and bake until heated through and top is golden brown, 20 to 30 minutes longer. Let stand 15 minutes before serving.