

LASAGNE

Serves 5-6

Preparation time: 30 mins

Cooking time over 2 hours: start at least 8 hours before serving or the day before.

Ingredients

For the ragu

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 800g beef mince
- 2 onions, roughly chopped
- 2 sticks celery, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed or chopped
- 2 level tbsp plain flour
- 150ml beef stock
- 1 tsp caster sugar
- 3 tbsp tomato purée
- 1 tbsp chopped thyme
- 2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes

For the white sauce

- 50g butter
- 50g plain flour
- 750ml hot milk
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 50g Parmesan, finely grated
- salt and freshly ground black pepper

For the lasagne

- 12 lasagne sheets
- 75g mature cheddar, grated

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 160°C (fan).
2. For the ragu, heat a large frying pan until hot and add the oil. Cook the mince until browned all over. Remove from the heat and transfer to a bowl. Add the onion, celery and garlic to the pan and cook until softened. Return the meat to the pan and stir in the flour. Add the beef stock and bring to the boil. Add the caster sugar, tomato purée and thyme, then stir well.
3. Stir in the canned tomatoes. Bring to the boil again, cover and simmer in the oven for 1-½ hours, or until the beef is tender.
4. For the white sauce, melt the butter in a saucepan. Add the flour and cook over the heat for one minute, stirring with a whisk so that it doesn't stay lumpy. Gradually whisk in the hot milk, whisking until thickened. Add the Dijon mustard and parmesan cheese and season well with salt and pepper.
5. For the lasagne, put one third of the meat sauce in the base of a 2.3 litre shallow (at least 6cms deep) ovenproof dish. Spoon one third of the white sauce on top. Arrange one layer of lasagne sheets on top. Season. Spoon half of the remaining meat sauce on top and then half of the white sauce. Put another layer of lasagne sheets on top, then the remaining meat sauce and remaining white sauce. Sprinkle over the cheddar cheese.
6. Leave for six hours before cooking so that the pasta can start to soften.
7. Preheat the oven temperature to 170°C (fan).
8. Cook in the middle of the oven for about 30 minutes (up to 45 minutes) - or until golden brown on top, bubbling around the edges and the pasta is soft.