

QUICK & EASY LASAGNA

12 oz. Italian sausages, casings removed
1 32-ounce jar tomato sauce – your favorite or your homemade meat sauce
1/2 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper – optional

LASAGNA

1 package ready cook lasagna noodles
2 15-ounce containers ricotta cheese
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese (about 3 ounces)
1 10-ounce package frozen chopped spinach, thawed, drained
squeezed dry (**optional**)
4 3/4 cups grated mozzarella cheese (about 1 1/4 pounds)

If you do not have a meat sauce already or you are keeping it vegetarian, then skip this step. Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add sausages, crushed pepper, and oil to pan; sauté until cooked through, breaking up meat with back of spoon, about 5 -8 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Add sauce cover and simmer until flavors blend and sauce measures about 5 cups, stirring occasionally, about 10 minutes. Cool.

LASAGNA: Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine ricotta and 3/4 cup Parmesan cheese in medium bowl. Mix in spinach. Season to taste with salt and pepper. For ease of use, you can also mix in the mozzarella cheese, but it makes it thick to spread. (so opt not) If it is very thick and stiff, you can mix in a bit of water to thin it for easier spreading.

Coat the bottom of 13x9-inch glass baking dish with a little oil. Place noodles down and begin to cover with sauce. Spread some of the ricotta-spinach mixture evenly over noodles. Sprinkle with the mozzarella cheese evenly over ricotta-spinach mixture. Repeat layering with noodles, sauce, ricotta-spinach mixture, mozzarella cheese. Spread remaining sauce over noodles. Sprinkle with remaining cheeses and ending with a topping of sauce and Parmesan cheese evenly over lasagna. (Can be prepared up to 1 day ahead. Cover tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate.)

Cover baking dish with sprayed nonstick spray aluminum foil. Bake lasagna 40 minutes; uncover and bake until hot and bubbly, another 15 minutes. Let lasagna stand 15 minutes before serving.

Serves 8.