

# *DROP DEAD LASAGNA*

*Recipe information: Italian Night 2007.*

*This is the old school lasagna that you find in the Italian restaurants in Brooklyn*

## *Ingredients:*

<i>1 Lb. ruffled lasagna noodles</i>	<i>Sea salt &amp; freshly ground black pepper</i>
<i>Extra Virgin olive oil</i>	<i>2 Lbs. ricotta cheese</i>
<i>1 onion diced</i>	<i>1/2 cup freshly grated</i>
<i>3 garlic cloves, minced</i>	<i>Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese</i>
<i>1 bay leaf</i>	<i>1/4 cup finely chopped fresh</i>
<i>1 1/2 Lbs. ground beef</i>	<i>flat-leaf parsley</i>
<i>1 Lb. ground pork</i>	<i>1/2 cup finely chopped fresh</i>
<i>1 Tbl. fennel seeds</i>	<i>basil</i>
<i>1/2 Tbl. red pepper flakes</i>	<i>2 eggs, lightly beaten</i>
<i>1 Tsp. brown sugar</i>	<i>2 Lbs. shredded mozzarella</i>
<i>1/2 Tbl. dries oregano</i>	<i>4 cups Marinara Sauce (home</i>
<i>1 - 6Oz. can tomato paste</i>	<i>made) or a good quality jarred</i>
	<i>pasta sauce</i>
	<i>Additional Parmigiano-</i>
	<i>Reggiano for serving</i>

## *Directions:*

Fill a large pasta pot with water and place over high heat. Add a generous amount of salt and bring to a boil. Cook the lasagna noodles for only 8 minutes; they should still be somewhat firm, as they will continue to cook when you bake the lasagna. Drain the noodles in a colander and rinse them quickly under cold water to stop the cooking process. Drizzle with some olive oil so the sheets don't stick together, then set aside.

Heat a large skillet over medium heat and drizzle with olive oil. Sauté the onion, garlic and bay leaf for a few minutes, until the onions are translucent. Add the ground beef and pork, stirring to break it up and cook until the meat is thoroughly browned, about 10 minutes. Drain out the excess fat. Combine the fennel seeds, red pepper flakes, brown sugar and dried oregano in a spice mill

or clean coffee grinder and sprinkle on the browned meat. Stir in the tomato paste until well blended, season with salt & pepper. Take the pan off the heat.

In a large bowl combine the ricotta and Parmigiano cheeses. Fold in the parsley, basil and eggs. Season with salt & pepper and mix well.

Preheat the oven to 350°. Ladle enough sauce into the bottom of a deep lasagna pan. Slightly overlap 4 lasagna noodles lengthwise so they completely cover the bottom of the pan, with no gaps. You should also take 2 lasagna noodles and line the short ends of the pan to act as walls to support the layers. Spread half the meat mixture on top of the noodles then spread half the cheese mixture spreading evenly with a spatula. Then top with 1/3 of the shredded mozzarella. Top with a full ladle of sauce, (about 1 cup) and smooth. Repeat with a layer of noodles, meat, cheese mixture, shredded mozzarella & sauce. Finish with a final layer of noodles, sauce & shredded mozzarella. Tap the pan a few times on the counter to expel any air.

Bake for 1 1/2 hours in your preheated oven or until golden & bubbly. Allow the lasagna to sit for 20 minutes before cutting & serving. Pass extra sauce & the Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese.

***Cook's Note:** The chef omitted the red pepper flakes and onions.*