



### **Meaty No-Boil Lasagna with Parmesan-Cottage Cheese**

Feel free to play around with add-ins. Layer in cooked Italian sausage, ground turkey seasoned with Italian seasoning, cooked spinach that has been squeezed to remove water, or thin layers of sliced cooked zucchini or eggplant to replace a layer of noodles.

1 16-ounce container cottage cheese  
1 egg  
1 cup freshly grated Parmesan (reserve  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup)  
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  yellow onion, diced  
Kosher salt  
1 pound ground beef (I use 90%), ground turkey or Italian sausage  
1 cup chopped mushrooms  
Ground black pepper  
1 cup chopped kale, center stems removed, or chopped spinach  
1 cup riced cauliflower  
5 cups tomato-basil sauce (I prefer Rao's Homemade Marina Sauce, but you can make a homemade sauce)  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  pound no-boil lasagna noodles, about 8 noodles or more  
 $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups grated mozzarella

Preheat oven to 350°F.

In a medium-size bowl, stir together the cottage cheese, egg and  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup Parmesan. (Or mix in a blender to make creamy and smooth.) Set aside.

Grab a [frying pan](#) and warm a tablespoon of olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the onion and sauté until softened, about two minutes. Sprinkle on a little kosher salt as the onions cook. Add the ground beef and break it up with a wooden spoon. Add another sprinkling of kosher salt to the meat as it cooks; it will draw out the moisture and flavor the meat. Add a cup of finely chopped mushrooms. Next, add some ground pepper and a heaping handful of finely chopped kale, center stems removed, and a cup of riced cauliflower (fresh or frozen). Let the cooked-meat-and-veggie mixture cook on the stove for at least 15 minutes or until all the moisture from the vegetables has rendered and evaporated.

In a 9×13 baking dish, spread 1 cup tomato sauce. Cover with a single layer of noodles without overlapping them. Spread on a third of the cottage cheese mixture, another cup of the sauce and top with a third of the sautéed meat. Add two more layers of noodles, ricotta, sauce and meat. Top with a final layer of noodles, remaining sauce, the mozzarella and the remaining ¼ cup of Parmesan. Be sure the top layer of noodles is covered with sauce (if any edges are dry or uncovered, they will be crispy instead of soft).

Bake uncovered for 50 minutes in the middle of the oven, until bubbly and golden brown. If the cheese starts to get too dark, cover the pan with foil during baking. Let stand for 5 minutes before cutting.

The lasagna can be assembled and frozen before baking. Place in refrigerator the night before you plan to bake it, or just bake from frozen, covered, and add 15 minutes.

**Notes:**

- + Baking-dish size can vary, and this will still turn out OK! I make this in an [11x8 Emile Henry](#) baking dish and also in a 9x13. It's a little full in the 11x8, but it perfectly fits 4 lasagna sheets across the pan, so I love using it. You could also use a good old-fashioned [Pyrex casserole dish](#).
- + Lasagna noodles: I typically buy [Central Market](#) or [365 No-Boil Lasagne](#) noodles that are flat and don't have the ruffled edges. You can also make this with [Cappello's Grain Free Lasagna Sheets](#), [Jovial gluten-free noodles](#), [Banza chickpea lasagna noodles](#), [whole wheat noodles](#) or [fancy Italian lasagna sheets](#) (this brand is actually imported from Italy by Stonewall Kitchen). Any lasagna sheets can be no-boil, they don't need to be labeled that way. The liquid from the sauce bakes the noodles in the oven, but it's important to bake the lasagna covered so the noodles get the extra benefit of the steam that's created when something is cooked with a lid or foil.
- + If you don't have ground beef, you can leave it out or use ground turkey, ground pork or ground Italian sausage.
- + I use [Rao's Marinara](#) in this, but you could [make your own](#) simple sauce or use your favorite store-bought sauce.
- + I've used both pre-grated mozzarella and fresh mozzarella that I slice and spread out in the casserole dish. You can use more cheese if you like a really cheesy and gooey lasagna.
- + Don't skimp on the grated Parmesan. It adds salt and umami and rich flavor. When you freshly grate Parmesan on a microplane, it is light and airy. You don't need to tightly pack it in a measuring cup, but don't let your measurement be more air than cheese. This is going to confuse my type-A friends out there, so just pack the cheese in the measuring cup. The more the merrier!
- + Leftovers are amazing the next day!

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