

Hearty Lasagna

The combination of firm tofu and soft tofu in this recipe makes a delightfully flavorful ricotta cheese replica. Baked, the tofu ricotta offers a wonderful texture, which nicely complements the chewy pasta noodles and the spinach filling. From *The 30-Day Vegan Challenge*

INGREDIENTS

½-1 pound lasagna noodles
2 10-ounce packages frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained
2 16-ounce packages firm tofu
1 tablespoon sugar
¼ cup non-dairy milk (as necessary to create the right consistency)
½ teaspoon garlic powder (a couple cloves of fresh garlic is also an option)
2 tablespoons lemon juice
5 teaspoons fresh basil, minced
2 teaspoons salt
4 cups tomato sauce

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Cook the lasagna noodles according to the package directions – or use the “no-need-to-bake” noodles. Drain and set aside. Squeeze the spinach as dry as possible and set aside.
3. Place the tofu, sugar, milk, garlic powder, lemon juice, basil, and salt in a food processor or blender and blend until smooth. Transfer to large bowl, and stir in the spinach.
4. Cover the bottom of a 9-inch-by-13-inch baking dish with a thin layer of tomato sauce, then a layer of noodles (use about one-third of the noodles). Follow with half of the tofu filling. Continue in the same order, using half of the remaining tomato sauce and noodles and all of the remaining tofu filling. End with the remaining noodles, covered by the remaining tomato sauce. Bake for 30 minutes.

Muhammara (Roasted Red Pepper and Walnut Spread)

A delicious rich red pepper spread with walnuts and a hint of spiciness. Make this

the day before serving to allow the flavors of the spices to mix.

Makes 1 cup or more

Ingredients

2 to 3 whole roasted peppers (from jar or roasted yourself)
2/3 cup bread crumbs (see below to make your own)
1 cup walnuts, toasted
4 large garlic cloves
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
2 teaspoons clover agave nectar
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes (or more for added spice)

In a blender or food processor, combine the peppers and all the remaining ingredients. Taste, and add more spice or salt as necessary.

Serving suggestions and variations

- * Garnish with toasted pine nuts
- * To toast walnuts, just place them on a toaster oven tray and toast for 5 minutes; watch closely or they will burn.
- * Serve with pita triangles, fresh bread, crackers, chips, carrots, mushrooms, cucumber, etc.

To make your own bread crumbs: Place some bread (stale bread works great) in the oven until it's crispy but not really browned – at 300 degrees). Let it cool, then add it to your food processor until it is reduced to crumbs. Add Italian herbs such as dried oregano, thyme, basil, marjoram, rosemary, black pepper, etc. Enjoy!

To roast your own pepper: Heat the oven to 525 degrees (or use your broiler if you have one). Place peppers on an oiled cookie sheet. Roast on the highest rack for about 30 minutes or until they turn completely black. It's not necessary to turn them. Remove them from the oven, and put them in a paper bag right away. Let them cool before handling them. The blackened skin will then just peel off after only about 10 minutes in the bag. Roasting peppers over an open flame is also a great way to do it (and you don't need any oil). Use your gas range or grill. Use tongs and just turn over an open flame for about 10 minutes until charred. Proceed as above.

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Brown Lentil Soup

Being semi-pureed, this soup is both smooth and textured. It's hearty, nutritious, and full of flavor. From *Color Me Vegan*.

Ingredients

2 tablespoons water for sautéing
1 large yellow onion, chopped
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 cup brown/cremini or shitake mushrooms
2 carrots, finely chopped
2 celery stalks, finely chopped
2 cups brown lentils, picked through and rinsed
8 cups vegetable stock
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground coriander
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground cumin
2 tomatoes, seeded and chopped
1 teaspoon truffle salt
Salt and pepper, to taste
Chopped fresh parsley, as garnish

Heat up the water in a soup pot over medium heat. Once hot, add the onion, garlic, mushrooms, carrot, and celery, and cook until the onions are translucent, about 7 minutes.

Add the lentils, stock, salt, coriander, and cumin, and stir to combine. Increase the heat to high and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low, cover, and cook until the lentils are tender, about 35 to 40 minutes.

Using an immersion blender, puree to your preferred consistency. Alternatively, you may transfer a portion of the soup to the blender, puree, and then return to the pot. Add the tomatoes to the semi-pureed soup, and stir to combine. Add the truffle salt, if desired, taste for seasonings, and add more salt if necessary.

Serve hot topped with freshly ground pepper and chopped parsley.

Yield: 6 to 8 servings

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The award-winning author of five books, including the bestselling *The Joy of Vegan Baking*, *The Vegan Table*, *Color Me Vegan*, and *Vegan's Daily Companion*, Colleen Patrick-Goudreau empowers and inspires people to live according to their own values of compassion and wellness, using her unique blend of passion, humor, and common sense. She contributes to National Public Radio and *The Christian Science Monitor*, and has appeared on *The Food Network* and PBS. Her fifth book, *The 30-Day Vegan Challenge*, published by Random House, just came out in August 2011. Visit colleenpatrickgoudreau.com for more.