Roasted Vegetable Lasagna

Serves 4 with leftover lasagna. Total time 60 minutes.

Roasted Vegetable Lasagna

1 small eggplant
2 zucchini
2 yellow squash
1 onion
1 T. olive oil
4 T. red wine vinegar
½ tsp. dried Italian seasoning (thyme, basil, oregano)
1/8 tsp. salt
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
12 whole wheat lasagna noodles
9 oz. frozen, chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
15 oz. carton nonfat or low-fat ricotta cheese
¼ cup shredded Parmesan
½ tsp. dried Italian seasoning
3 cups lower-sodium marinara sauce
6 oz. (1.5 cups) shredded part-skim mozzarella

Preheat oven to 450° F. Fill a large pot with water, cover, and bring to a boil over high heat. Slice eggplant, zucchini, squash, and onions lengthwise and then crosswise into ½” slices. Separate onions into rings. Spread vegetables on a large nonstick baking sheet and drizzle with oil, vinegar, ½ tsp. Italian seasoning, salt, and pepper. Toss to coat, spread into a single layer, and roast 20 minutes, stirring halfway.

Meanwhile, add lasagna noodles to boiling water, lower heat to medium high, and gently boil 8-10 minutes until al dente; drain.

In a medium bowl, combine spinach, ricotta, Parmesan, ½ tsp. dried Italian seasoning, and black pepper. Lower oven temperature to 375° F. To assemble lasagna, spray a 9 x 13” baking pan with nonstick cooking spray. Spread ¼ cup sauce on bottom of pan. Layer 4 noodles, dollop ½ of ricotta mixture along noodles, spread with ½ of vegetable mixture and ½ cup of marinara. Repeat and top with remaining noodles, marinara, and mozzarella cheese. Bake 30 minutes. Top with parsley and let stand 10 minutes before serving.

Nutrition Information (per 1/8 lasagna): 271 cal, 15 g protein, 6 g fat, 0 g trans fat, 38 g carb, 6.5 g fiber, 19 mg chol, 341 mg sodium. 1 serving equals: 3 vegetables, 2 whole grains, 1.5 protein/dairy

Mixed Green Salad with Sun-Dried Tomatoes and Pine Nuts

8 T. julienne cut sun-dried tomatoes
1 cup boiling water
8 cups spring mix salad greens
4 T. pine nuts
4 T. balsamic vinaigrette or your favorite light salad dressing

Combine tomatoes and boiling water in a small bowl. Let stand 5 minutes to rehydrate tomatoes; drain. Combine salad greens with sun-dried tomatoes, pine nuts, and balsamic vinaigrette. Serve immediately.

Nutrition Information (per 1/4 recipe, 2 cups): 121 cal, 3.5 g protein, 8 g fat, 0.5 g sat. fat, 0 g trans fat, 11 g carb, 4 g fiber, 0 mg chol, 295 mg sodium. 1 serving equals: 1 vegetable, 1 fat

Dark Chocolate Dipped Strawberries

2 oz. dark chocolate, broken into pieces
1 tsp. canola oil
4 cups whole strawberries, divided

Cover a large baking sheet with wax paper. Place chocolate and canola oil in a microwave-safe bowl and microwave 1 minute or until melted, stirring every 20 seconds. Dip half of strawberries halfway in melted chocolate, swirling to coat, and place on wax paper. Chill berries 20 minutes to harden chocolate. To serve, arrange chocolate dipped strawberries on a serving platter alternating with the remaining strawberries.

Nutrition Information (per 1/4 recipe, 1 cup): 123 cal, 15 g protein, 6 g fat, 3 g sat. fat, 0 g trans fat, 17 g carb, 3.5 g fiber, 1 mg chol, 1 mg sodium. 1 serving equals: 2 fruits, 1 sweet

Total Meal Nutrition Information (per one serving of each recipe): 515 cal, 21 g protein, 20 g fat, 5 g sat. fat, 0 g trans fat, 66 g carb, 14 g fiber, 20 mg chol, 637 mg sodium. 1 serving equals: 4 vegetables, 2 fruits, 2 whole grains, 1.5 protein/dairy, 1 fat
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Shopping List

Produce Section
- 1 small eggplant
- 2 zucchini
- 2 yellow squash
- 1 onion
- 2 T. chopped fresh parsley
- 8 cups spring mix salad greens
- 8 T. julienne cut sun-dried tomatoes (see tip #1)
- 4 cups whole strawberries

Dry Goods Section
- 12 whole wheat lasagna noodles
- 3 cups lower-sodium marinara sauce (see tip #2)
- 1 T. olive oil
- 4 T. red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp. dried Italian seasoning (thyme, basil, oregano)
- 4 T. pine nuts (see tip #3)
- 4 T. balsamic vinaigrette or your favorite light salad dressing
- 2 oz. dark chocolate, broken into pieces (see tip #4)
- 1 tsp. canola oil

Meat/ Dairy Section
- 15 oz. carton nonfat or low-fat ricotta cheese
- ½ cup shredded Parmesan
- 6 oz. (1.5 cups) shredded part-skim mozzarella

Frozen Foods Section
- 9 oz. frozen, chopped spinach

Smart Shopper Tip #1:
Look for sun-dried tomatoes in the produce section or with the salad dressings and croutons in your local supermarket. Choose the dry packed sun-dried tomatoes since they will be softened with a quick soak in warm water. If your tomatoes are already soft, you can skip the soaking step. If you can't find julienne cut, use a sharp knife or kitchen shears to thinly slice the larger pieces.

Smart Shopper Tip #2:
Store bought marinara sauce can be high in sodium. Look for a variety that has less than 20% Daily Value for sodium. A widely available brand is Ragu Light Tomato Basil.

Smart Shopper Tip #3:
Pine nuts are the seeds of pine trees. They are a common ingredient found in pesto. Their rich and slightly sweet flavor is delicious with many types of Italian dishes. Pine nuts may be stocked with the other nuts or in the spice section of your local supermarket. If you can't find them, substitute chopped walnuts.

Smart Shopper Tip #4:
Dark chocolate contains antioxidants called flavonoids that may lower inflammation in the arteries. A higher percentage of cacao (cocoa beans) means that it has more antioxidants. Look for a variety that is 60-80% cacao. Because of the high calorie and fat content, enjoy this delicious treat in moderation.

By Kelly Frazier, M.A., Furman University, Department of Health Science