

## Eggplant Lasagne with Parsley Pesto

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Yield Makes 8 servings

### Ingredients

#### For béchamel

- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 5 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 5 cups whole milk
- 1 Turkish or 1/2 California bay leaf
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon white pepper

#### For pesto and ricotta mixture

- 1 1/3 cups hazelnuts (5 1/2 ounces), toasted and loose skins rubbed off in a kitchen towel
- 4 cups loosely packed fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves (from 3/4 lb)
- 3 ounces finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano (1 1/2 cups)
- 2/3 cup plus 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 1/4 teaspoons black pepper
- 1 large egg
- 1 (15-ounce) container whole-milk ricotta

#### For lasagne

- 4 pounds medium eggplants (4), cut crosswise into 1/3-inch-thick slices
- 6 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 9 (7- by 3 1/2-inch) oven-ready lasagne noodles (sometimes called "no-boil"; 6 oz)
- 1 1/2 ounces finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

### Preparation

#### Make béchamel:

Cook garlic in butter in a 3-quart heavy saucepan over moderately low heat, stirring, 1 minute. Add flour and cook roux, whisking, 3 minutes. Add milk in a stream, whisking. Add bay leaf and bring to a boil over moderately high heat, whisking constantly, then reduce heat and simmer, whisking occasionally, until liquid is reduced to about 4 cups, about 10 minutes. Whisk in salt and white pepper, then remove from heat and discard bay leaf. Cover surface of sauce with wax paper until ready to use.

#### Make pesto and ricotta mixture:

Coarsely chop 1/3 cup hazelnuts and reserve for sprinkling over lasagne.

Purée parsley, Parmigiano-Reggiano, 2/3 cup oil, garlic, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon pepper, and remaining cup hazelnuts in a food processor until pesto is smooth, about 1 minute.

Whisk egg in a bowl, then stir in ricotta, 1 cup parsley pesto, remaining teaspoon salt, and remaining 1/4 teaspoon pepper until combined well.

Stir together 1/4 cup pesto and remaining 1/4 cup oil in a small bowl for drizzling over lasagne.

#### Roast eggplant for lasagne:

Put oven racks in upper and lower thirds of oven and preheat oven to 450°F. Oil 2 large baking sheets.

Brush eggplant with oil on both sides, then arrange in 1 layer on baking sheets and sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Bake eggplant, switching position of sheets halfway through baking and turning slices over once, until tender, 20 to 25 minutes total.