

## Celebrate National Pasta Month!

### *Jungle Jim's Margie Potts Reveals:* Lazy Luscious Lasagna – Take Two

It's National Pasta month and I really don't know anyone that doesn't like Lasagna. Most folks make it only for special occasions because it can involve a lot of steps and a lot of time – I know my original recipe does. However, I have adapted these Lasagna recipes below to take advantage of new products on the market, so you can enjoy Lasagna any day of the week – with very little effort and prep time, but with lots and lots of flavor. It's a dish that can be as diversified as your tastes and you can make each one of these recipes your own!

#### Momma's Lasagna

1 ½ lb.	Sweet Italian Sausage or Ground Chuck or combination of both
½ Cup	Onion, minced (optional)
2 cloves	Garlic, minced
2-3	28 – 32 oz. Jars of Prepared Pasta Sauce (see note below) (see list of seasonings to adjust sauce if desired)
1 Pkg.	Oven ready or No-boil Lasagna Noodles (12)
16 oz.	Ricotta Cheese
1	Large Egg, beaten
½ Cup	Grated Parmesan Cheese
2 Tab.	Fresh Parsley, chopped (can also add one 10 oz. Package of chopped spinach, thawed, squeezed dried to the Ricotta mixture)
(if you like a lot of Ricotta, you can use add another 8 oz. Container of Ricotta)	
16 oz.	Shredded or Sliced Mozzarella Cheese
6 Large Slices of Provolone Cheese – if you want it really cheesy!	
	Additional Parmesan for sprinkling on top

In a large skillet or saucepan, cook sausage and/or ground chuck, onion, and garlic over medium heat until well browned. Drain off excess fat. (If you are using Jungle Jim's Italian Sausage, you will not only get great flavor, but their sausage is very lean and you probably won't have to drain – first time saver!)

Second time saver: Stir in two jars of prepared sauce to make your meat sauce. If I am using 3 jars, I usually keep the third jar to pour on the bottom of the pan and over the last layer. You can do this either way – it depends on how saucy you like your lasagna. You may or may not use the entire third jar, but the sauce keeps well in the refrigerator for another night's dinner! Simmer mixture for about 5 minutes and then taste for seasoning. You can utilize any of the seasonings below to adjust the taste of your sauce to your individual tastes.

#### Optional seasonings to sauce:

2 Tsp.	Dried Basil
1 Tsp.	Dried Oregano
Pinch or 2	Sugar
	Kosher Salt to taste
	Freshly Ground Pepper to taste
	Crushed Red Pepper Flakes
2 Tabs.	Fresh Parsley

**Important Time Saver Before You Season:** Shopping in the Jungle, you will find so many wonderful freshly prepared sauces to choose from: I read the labels and the ones I chose did not have any added sugar or cholesterol and offered many flavorful varieties. One choice was produced by a friend of mine and owner of Germano's restaurant in Montgomery – Germano's Marinara Sauce – no cholesterol, no sugar added and all natural ingredients. Other favorites of mine include the all natural Pitrelli's Basil and Garlic Marinara Sauce, Cleveland's Own Little Italy Pasta Sauce, and Capozzi's All Natural Spaghetti Sauce. In addition to these and many more, there is an array of more than a dozen USDA Organic pasta sauces to choose from in many varieties as well. All these sauces come a long way from the prepared sauces of yesteryear - both in taste and ingredients - and are definitely worth a try – you'll be surprised how fresh they taste! You may find you need no extra seasoning at all!

Our third time saver is our no boil – oven ready – lasagna noodles. Just open the package and they are ready to go. No boiling, no draining, no rinsing, no extra pot to clean up! Next, in a mixing bowl, combine the ricotta cheese with beaten egg; add parmesan cheese and chopped fresh parsley.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. if baking right away. (Can also assemble and refrigerate until baking time.)

**To assemble:** Spread a little sauce to coat the bottom of a 9 x 13 x 2 inch pan. Layer 1/3 of the noodles (4) on the bottom of the pan. Spread with ½ ricotta mixture, and 1/3 of mozzarella and ½ of the Provolone Cheese. Spoon 1/3 of remaining sauce over cheeses. Top with 4 more noodles. Top with the remaining ricotta mixture, 1/3 of the mozzarella cheese and the rest of the Provolone. Pour another 1/3 sauce over cheeses. Top with the last four noodles, the remainder of the sauce and a sprinkling of Parmesan Cheese. Bake covered with aluminum foil in a preheated 350 degree oven for 40 minutes. Then, remove foil covering, and top the lasagna with the remaining Mozzarella Cheese. Now bake an additional 10 minutes until cheese melts. Take carefully from oven and allow Lasagna to rest for 10 minutes before cutting. (40-10-10) Serve with fresh European bakery bread from Jungle Jim's or the yummy garlic bread and a fresh, crisp green salad. Warms up great for lunch tomorrow, too!

*Now, if you're hankering for a pasta this month with a south of the border flavor, here's a great recipe to try!*

## Margie's Mexican Lasagna

1 lb. Jungle Jims' fresh Chorizo sausage\*  
½ Cup chopped Onion (optional)

\*If using Ground Chuck in lieu of the Chorizo, season your meat with a little chili powder or taco seasoning, cumin, garlic powder, some dried oregano and a little cayenne pepper to taste to spice it up.

1 – 16 oz. Can of Refried beans seasoned with ½ tsp. Ground Cumin  
1 28-32 oz. Jar of Marinara Pasta Sauce (plain)  
2 Cups Tomato Sauce  
1 ½ cups Mild Salsa or Mild Picante sauce  
2 Tab. Fresh Cilantro, chopped  
Salt and pepper to taste  
1 Pkg. Oven ready or no boil Lasagna Noodles  
16 oz. Ricotta Cheese  
8 oz. Monterey Jack Cheese, shredded  
¼ cup Sour cream  
1 4 oz. Chopped green chilies, drained  
2 Tabs. Fresh cilantro, chopped  
16 oz. Shredded Colby or Cheddar or Mixed Mexican Cheese

Garnishes after baking: black olives, sliced green onions, sour cream and chopped cilantro

In a large sauce pan, cook Chorizo or ground chuck, onion, and garlic over medium heat until well browned. Drain off excess fat. (Again, if you are using Jungle Jim's Chorizo – no need to drain – time saver #1 – and lots of flavor – it's got some heat as well!) Stir in refried beans and set aside. (If using Ground Chuck, remember to season first.)

In a mixing bowl, combine the pasta sauce, tomato sauce and salsa - #2 time saver. Goya brand at the Jungle has a wonderful mild Picante Sauce or you could select one of the salsas from a whole aisle of salsas in the Mexican section or you could choose the fresh salsa from the Mexican refrigerated section. One important thing to note here if you are using the Chorizo – it is spicy, so you may want to choose a MILD salsa or Picante sauce unless you like it hot!

Open the package of your no cook or oven ready lasagna noodles – ready to go – time saver #3.

In a mixing bowl, combine the ricotta cheese with the sour cream, adding the drained chopped chilies, cilantro and cheese.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. if baking right away. (Can also assemble and refrigerate until baking time.)

**To assemble:** Spread a little sauce to coat the bottom of a 9 x 13 x 2 inch pan. Layer 1/3 of the noodles (4) on the bottom of the pan. Spread with ½ ricotta mixture, and 1/3 of the shredded cheese. Spoon half of the meat mixture over the cheese. Spoon 1/3 of remaining sauce over the meat mixture. Top with 4 more noodles. Top with the remaining ricotta mixture and 1/3 of the shredded cheese. Spoon the other half of the meat mixture over the cheese. Pour another 1/3 sauce over the meat mixture. Top with the last four noodles, the remainder of the sauce and cover the casserole. Set aside the last 1/3 of the shredded cheese. Bake covered with aluminum foil in a preheated 350 degree oven for 40 minutes. Then, remove foil covering, and top the lasagna with the remaining shredded Cheese. Now bake an additional 10 minutes until cheese melts. Take carefully from oven and allow Lasagna to rest for 10 minutes before cutting. (40-10-10) Set out garnishes above to serve. Can serve with a cold, crisp guacamole salad (top torn iceberg lettuce with fresh guacamole, adding sliced tomatoes and sliced radishes to the side.) Yummy!

As always, these recipes can reflect your personal tastes – you can add olives or chopped mushrooms or artichokes to your Italian sauces or simply choose sauces with these ingredients already added, or you could add corn kernels, peppers, and drained and rinsed black beans to your Mexican meat mixture – experiment with these recipes to make them your own, but remember the time savers and you'll find yourself looking forward to tossing together this simple, but delicious one dish meal together for your family and friends.

As always, Have Fun Cooking!  
*Jungle Jim's Margie Potts*