



DO NOT ADD SALT - There's loads of salt in this already with the rashers, tomato purée, butter and cheese. So in case you have the habit of sprinkling salt over any veg you cook don't do it with this. If you like a lot of salt wait until the bolognese is ready to see if you think it needs more. As you can probably tell I made this mistake first.

I love lasagne. I love all those stodgy kinds of [shepherd's pie](#) dinners. But I wasn't very good at cooking it, generally tended to buy them instead, and so for the last couple of weeks I decided that I was going to get a good, easy-to-follow recipe for lasagne. I have a very easy (and quite nice) recipe for [Spaghetti Bolgnese](#) and I started off trying to make the lasagne with that but it just didn't work. This recipe is a mix of Delia Smith's one from the Complete Cookery Course and a recipe for a Three Cheeses Lasagne from one of the sets of free-with-coupons cookbooks I have. It's not as cheesy as the 3 cheese one or as meaty as Delia Smith's but I've hit on the combination I'm happy with - hopefully you'll like it too.

Obviously this recipe is not for the calorie conscious. Or for those concerned about their blood [cholesterol](#) levels. If you have high cholesterol remember that it is more important to consume more ["good" fat](#) than ["bad" fat](#) than it is to lower your total fat intake. This is true if all you are trying to do is lower your cholesterol but obviously if you are trying to lose weight as well as lower your cholesterol then you probably also need to lower your total fat (and calorie) intake. So if like me you have a tendency towards high cholesterol levels then be sure and have some "good" fat with this - like avocado and olives.

The way I make Cheezy Lasagne is



Ingredients:

Serves 2 - 4

For the bolognese:

- 400g lean minced beef
- 6 streaky back unsmoked rashers, minced (*mix in food processor*)
- 1 large carrot, finely chopped
- 2 celery sticks, finely chopped
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 tsp dried basil
- 1 large garlic clove, crushed
- 1 tin plum tomatoes
- 2 dessertspoons tomato purée
- 1 good splash of red wine
- olive oil

For the béchamel sauce:

- 50g salted butter
 - 2 heaped tbsp plain flour
 - good pinch freshly grated nutmeg
 - 1 pint whole milk
 - 50g grated Parmesan (or [Grana Padano](#)) *to taste*
-
- sheets of pasta for lasagne (*the no-need-to-pre-cook type if possible*)
 - 125g mozzarella, sliced
 - grated Parmesan (or Grana Padano)

Instructions:

For the bolognese:

1. In a large heavy saucepan or frying pan heat a little olive oil. Add the finely chopped (or minced by the food processor) carrot, celery and onion to the pan, cover and leave to sweat on a gentle heat for 5 minutes.
2. Sprinkle over the dried basil and leave for another minute or two.
3. Crumble in the beef and rasher mince, turn up the heat to high and keep stirring the meat around until the beef has lost all its pink colour.
4. Stir in the crushed garlic and add the tinned tomatoes, breaking up them up with a wooden spoon.
5. Pour in a generous splash of red wine (*but only about 1/4 of a glass*), stir in the tomato purée and reduce to a gentle heat.

6. Cover and leave to cook for 25 minutes, then uncover and leave to cook for a further 20 minutes for a more concentrated sauce.

For the béchamel sauce:

1. With the bolognese simmering away, melt the butter on a gentle heat in another saucepan. It's important not to burn the sauce so don't let it sizzle.
2. When the butter has fully melted stir in the flour and nutmeg. Stir it around for a couple of minutes making sure that the flour is completely cooked otherwise the sauce will taste floury.

3. Add a little milk and keep stirring it around till it has fully blended in with the flour and butter. Keep doing this until you have eventually blended in the full pint of milk. When you have about a third of the milk added you may need to turn up the heat a little. *This sauce isn't difficult but it takes ages and you have to keep stirring all the time to stop it forming lumps.*

4. Stir in the grated Parmesan or Grana Padano.

Putting the lasagne together:

1. If you have fresh lasagne sheets, you need to cook them separately in boiling water for about 3 minutes. Put them in cold water immediately to prevent sticking. Dried lasagne sheets need about 8 minutes cooking. *I have never done this as I think most lasagne that you buy now doesn't need pre-cooking.*
2. Grease your oven dish with olive oil or butter if you prefer.
3. Add some of the white sauce to the bottom of the dish. Layer a single layer of pasta sheets over this, spoon half of the bolognese over this, layer again with the pasta, spoon over the rest of the meat, add a final layer of pasta sheets.
4. Arrange the slices of mozzarella on top, pour over the white sauce and sprinkle some grated Parmesan over this.

5. Bake in an oven for 40 - 60 minutes at 180°C/ 350°F/ Gas Mark 4.