

Source: <https://julskitchen.substack.com/p/sagne-a-lu-fuorn-southern-lasagne>

Sagne a lu' fuorn' - My family Southern lasagne for your Christmas holidays

It might seem quite a daunting recipe, but once you tackle it in stages, you realize it is just a matter of organization. Make the meat sauce and the polpettine the day before so that you'll have them ready when you want to make your lasagne.

RECIPE - Southern Meat Sauce with braciolo

For the braciolo

- a large, 1cm/³/₈ inch thick beef steak, about 1 pound/450 grams
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped parsley
- 1 tablespoon Pecorino Romano, grated
- 1 tablespoon Parmigiano Reggiano, grated
- ½ clove garlic, minced
- Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

For the meat sauce

- 2 pounds/900 g country-style pork ribs, cut into 2-inch/5 cm pieces
- 1 red onion, finely chopped
- ⅓ cup/80 ml extra virgin olive oil
- 6 cups/1.4 litres tomato passata
- 1 cup/240 ml warm water
- Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. **Prepare the braciolo.** Lay the beef steak on a cutting board, and season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle the steak with the chopped parsley and garlic, and the grated Parmigiano and Pecorino. Roll the braciolo onto itself and secure it with a few pieces of butcher's twine.
2. **Prepare the meat sauce.** Season the pork all over with salt and pepper.
3. Heat the olive oil in a 12-inch heavy-bottomed skillet or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, add the rolled braciola and the pork ribs in a single layer—in batches if necessary—and cook, turning occasionally with tongs, until browned on all sides, about 10 minutes.
4. As it is browned, remove the meat from the pan and move it into a large platter.
5. Add the finely chopped onion to the pot and cook on medium-low heat for about 5 to 8 minutes, until translucent. Return the meat to the pot now, and pour in the tomato passata. Use one cup of warm water to clean the passata bottles and pour that into the pot.
6. Bring to a simmer, then reduce the heat to the minimum and simmer, covered for about 2.5 hours, checking it occasionally to make sure the sauce is not sticking to the bottom. Taste and adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper. The sauce is ready when you can spot puddles of ruby-red oil on the surface.
7. Remove the braciolo and the pork ribs from the tomato sauce, you won't need them now, but you'll have lunch ready.
8. The sauce is now ready for the meatballs. You can prepare the sauce the day before and keep it in the fridge.

RECIPE - Polpettine, tiny meatballs

Now it's time to make the tiny meatballs that will stud the rich tomato sauce. An extra pair of hands will be helpful now.

- 3.5 oz/100 grams day-old bread
- 1 cup/240 ml warm milk
- 7 oz/ 200 grams ground beef

- 2 tablespoons finely chopped parsley
 - 1 clove garlic, minced
 - 4 tablespoons/30 grams Pecorino Romano, grated
 - 4 tablespoons/30 grams Parmigiano Reggiano, grated
 - 1 teaspoon fine sea salt
 - 1 egg, slightly beaten
 - Freshly ground black pepper
 - ½ cup/60 grams all-purpose flour
 - 4 cups/1 litre grapeseed or other neutral frying oil, for frying
 - The prepared tomato sauce.
1. Soak the bread in milk for about 10 minutes, until it becomes soft and spongy. Squeeze out the excess milk and crumble the bread in a bowl.
 2. Add also the minced meat, chopped parsley, minced garlic, the grated Pecorino and Parmigiano, fine sea salt and the beaten egg. Season a few grinds of black pepper. Thoroughly mix the ingredients with your hands until smooth.
 3. Arrange on the table a tray generously dusted with flour. Prepare also a bowl of water: you will have to wet your hands from time to time, as this will help you to shape smooth tiny meatballs.
 4. Make the meatballs with a teaspoon and roll them on the palms of your hand until as round and big as a hazelnut. Roll in flour and leave them in the tray.
 5. When all the meatballs are ready, heat the frying oil in a medium-sized frying pan. Fry the meatballs in 4 or 5 batches, for about five minutes, turning them often, until golden. As they are ready, move them into a large dish lined with kitchen paper to absorb the frying oil.

If you taste a couple of meatballs you'll notice they might seem a bit too dry. Don't worry, as they will now recook in the tomato sauce, becoming soft and juicy.

6. When you have fried all the meatballs, it's time to add them to the pot with the hot tomato sauce. Cook the meatballs in the tomato sauce for about 30 minutes, then turn off the heat and set the sauce aside. You can use it immediately for the lasagna or leave it for the next day.

RECIPE - Southern Lasagna

Now that the rich tomato sauce and the polpettine are ready, it's time to prepare the fresh lasagna sheets and assemble the lasagna. We won't be cooking the lasagna sheets, so make sure to roll them out as thin as possible, as they will be cooking directly in the oven with the moisture of the mozzarella and the tomato sauce.

For the lasagna sheets

- 2 cups plus 1 tablespoon/400 grams semolina flour
 - 7 oz/200 ml water
 - To assemble
 - 4 hard-boiled eggs, sliced
 - 8 oz/225 grams scamorza, sliced
 - 3 mozzarella balls, 4.5 oz/125 grams each, sliced
 - 7 oz/ 200 grams dry sausages, sliced
 - 4 oz/120 grams Pecorino Romano, grated
 - 3½ tablespoons/50 grams butter, plus more for greasing the pan
1. **Make the lasagna sheets.** Pour the flour on a work surface and shape it into a mound with a large well in the centre, then add the water. Using a fork, stir slowly, starting from the centre and gradually picking up more flour from the edges. When the dough turns crumbly, switch to kneading with your hands.
 2. Continue kneading the ball of dough until the gluten starts to develop, as this will render the sheets of pasta more elastic. The dough is ready when you have clean

hands and a clean board, and when the ball of dough is smooth, silky, and no longer sticky.

3. Alternatively, consider kneading the dough in a mixer with the dough hook for about 5 minutes on low speed, then finish kneading by hand for 5 minutes.
4. When the ball of dough is smooth, silky, and no longer sticky, cover with a bowl and rest for 30 minutes at room temperature before using it.
5. **Now roll out the dough.** Divide the pasta dough into 6 equal portions. Lightly flour a work surface with semolina flour and, with a rolling pin, roll out one piece of dough into a ½-inch/1 cm-thick rectangle. Keep the remaining pieces covered with a clean kitchen towel.
6. Turn the dial on your pasta machine to the widest setting. Feed the dough through the rollers, then fold the sheet of pasta in three, as if you were folding a letter. Starting with one of the open sides, feed the pasta dough through the machine again. Repeat three times.
7. Now roll the pasta sheet thinner by turning the dial to the next narrower setting. Roll the pasta through the machine, gently pulling it towards you: holding the pasta sheet with the palm of your hand, while you are cranking the machine with the other hand.
8. Every time you reduce the settings, pass the lasagne sheets into semolina flour: it will prevent it from sticking and tearing. Keep reducing the settings until the dough is rolled as thinly as you'd like. I usually stop at the 7th one (Marcato or Kitchen Aid). Transfer to a rimmed baking sheet dusted with semolina, then dust each pasta sheet generously with more semolina so they don't stick together as you stack them.

Assemble the lasagna

1. Heat the oven to 400°F/200°C.
2. Have all the other ingredients ready nearby. If the meat sauce is cold, reheat it until warm. Butter a 9- by 13-inch/23x33cm baking dish.
3. Line the baking dish with enough sheets of pasta to cover it. Spoon some of the meat sauce with the meatballs over the pasta sheets and spread it into a thin, even layer.

Then scatter with the sliced mozzarella, scamorza, hard-boiled eggs and dry sausage. Sprinkle with some of the grated Pecorino. Repeat the layering until you have used all of the pasta, meat sauce, sliced mozzarella and scamorza, eggs, sausage, and Pecorino. You should have five layers, ending with a layer with just tomato sauce and meatballs, and grated Pecorino.

4. Dot the lasagna top with slivers of butter, then transfer to the hot oven and bake for about 45 minutes or until golden brown and bubbling.
5. Remove the lasagna from the oven, and let it cool. Let them rest for a few hours, reheat gently in the oven, then cut into squares and serve. Lasagna improves with time; if you'd like, let it cool completely, then refrigerate overnight. Reheat, covered, in a hot oven.