

Source:

# **Lasagna with roasted squash, taleggio, and guanciale**

Serves 8

## **INGREDIENTS for the roasted squash**

- 1 kg butternut squash, seeds removed, cut into 1cm cubes
- ⅓ cup/80 ml extra virgin olive oil
- ½ teaspoon fine sea salt
- Grated nutmeg
- 2 sprigs of sage
- 2 sprigs of rosemary

## **INGREDIENTS for the Homemade lasagne sheets**

- 200 grams 0 flour, or all-purpose flour
- 40 grams semolina flour
- 50 grams spinach, already cooked and well-drained
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1 pinch salt
- a handful young sage leaves

## **INGREDIENTS for the Béchamel sauce**

- 60 grams all-purpose flour
- 60 grams unsalted butter
- 1 l whole milk
- 1 teaspoon fine sea salt

- Grated nutmeg
- Other ingredients
- 200 grams guanciale, or pancetta, diced
- 4 sage leaves
- 250 grams taleggio cheese
- 100 grams Parmigiano Reggiano, grated
- 30 grams unsalted butter

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Prepare the roasted squash. Preheat the oven to 200°C (400 degrees F).
2. Collect the cubed squash in a bowl, drizzle with the olive oil, and dress it with salt and nutmeg. Stir to evenly distribute the dressing, then pour the cubed squash onto a large, rimmed baking sheet. Use a spatula to pour all the oil from the bowl.
3. Shake the baking sheet to distribute the squash, then scatter the top with sage and rosemary.
4. When the oven is hot, transfer the baking sheet into the oven and bake for about 1 hour, until the squash is golden, glistening with oil, and cooked through. Set aside. This can be made in advance and kept in the fridge for up to 2 days.
5. Make the homemade lasagna sheets. Pour the all-purpose flour and the semolina flour on a wooden working surface and shape them into a mound with a large well in the centre. Crack in the eggs, then pour in the olive oil and add a pinch of salt.
6. Using a fork, stir slowly, starting from the centre and gradually picking up more flour from the edges, whisking as if you are beating eggs for an omelet. When the dough turns crumbly, switch to kneading with your hands.
7. Continue kneading the ball of dough until the gluten starts to develop, as this will render the sheets of pasta stronger. When the ball of dough is smooth, silky, and no longer sticky, wrap it in plastic wrap, or cover it with a bowl, then let rest for 30 minutes at room temperature before using it.
8. Prepare the béchamel sauce. Melt the butter in a saucepan over medium heat. When melted, spoon in the flour and whisk for a few minutes until golden. You should smell a

nice toasted aroma. Pour in the cold milk in a thin stream, stirring constantly with a whisk to avoid lumps.

9. Cook the béchamel sauce for a few minutes, still stirring constantly, until thickened. Your whisk should leave visible trails in the sauce.
10. Season with salt and grated nutmeg. Cover with plastic wrap and set aside.
11. Now prepare the lasagne. Preheat the oven to 200°C (400 degrees F).
12. In a large pan, collect the guanciale and the sage leaves, then cook on medium flame until the guanciale is golden and crisp. Set aside.
13. Roll out the dough into paper-thin sheets of pasta. If you want to laminate the lasagna pasta sheets with sage, to enhance the aroma, follow the procedure illustrated in this post on the blog. Leave the pasta sheets on a tablecloth dusted with semolina flour.
14. Have all the other ingredients ready nearby. If the béchamel sauce is cold, reheat it until warm. Grease a 20x30cm (11- x 15-inch) baking dish with butter.
15. Spread some of the béchamel sauce across the bottom of the baking dish, just enough to make a thin, even layer. Then line it with enough sheets of pasta to cover it. Spoon some of the béchamel sauce over the pasta sheets and spread it into a thin, even layer. Scatter the roasted squash, guanciale, and taleggio on top of the béchamel, then sprinkle with grated Parmigiano Reggiano. Cover the béchamel sauce with more sheets of pasta, and repeat for three more layers.
16. Distribute a few slivers of butter over the top.
17. Bake for about 45 minutes or until golden brown and bubbling.
18. Serve immediately, or better yet, let it rest for a few hours, or even better, until the next day, and reheat just before serving.
19. Any leftovers can be kept in the fridge for up to three days. It freezes well, so you can even make the lasagna in advance and freeze it in a try once baked. Thaw in the fridge overnight and reheat it thoroughly in a moderately hot oven before serving.

## **Notes on the ingredients**

**Guanciale.** Guanciale is an Italian cured meat product prepared from pork jowl or cheeks. Its name comes from guancia, the Italian word for cheek. Yes, this is what you should be using to make carbonara and gricia. Even though it is harder than pancetta, that comes from the pig belly, it can be easily substituted with the same amount of pancetta, if this is what you can find. For a vegetarian version of this lasagna, skip it or substitute it with pan-fried mushrooms (fresh porcini, dry porcini, or chanterelles).

**Taleggio.** Taleggio is a cow cheese produced in Val Taleggio, an Alpine valley in the Italian region of Lombardy. The smell is strong—stinkily we could say—with a robust and complex flavour profile. Expect it to be creamy and buttery. It's great for melting in sauces, gratins, polenta, and savoury tarts. If you cannot find taleggio, use fontina or Brie instead.

**Butternut squash.** Butternut squash—or zucca violina, as it is known in Italy for its violin shape—can be roasted without peeling if the skin is not too thick. This is always my go-to solution as it saves up so much time.

Source: <https://julskitchen.substack.com/p/weekend-project-lemon-ricotta-cake>

# LEMON RICOTTA CAKE WITH PEARS

Serves 10 to 12

## INGREDIENTS

- 3 eggs
- 300 grams fresh sheep ricotta
- 250 grams sugar
- 1 organic lemon, zest and juice (about 50 ml)
- 300 grams all-purpose flour
- 15 grams baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon fine sea salt
- 1 small pear, peeled, cored and sliced
- Powdered sugar, to serve

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F.
2. Separate egg yolks and egg whites, and whip the egg whites until soft peaks form. Don't whip them to stiff peaks, otherwise it will be difficult to incorporate them into the thick cake batter. Set the whipped egg whites aside.
3. Drain the ricotta to remove the excess whey. You don't need to have a dry ricotta, just remove the liquid at the bottom of its container. If the ricotta is soft, a wooden spoon or a whisk will be enough to mix it with the sugar, but if the ricotta is too dry and compact, you might want to pass it through a sieve to avoid annoying lumps.
4. Mix the ricotta with the sugar until silky and creamy, then add the lemon zest and lemon juice, and eventually the yolks.

5. Now add flour, baking powder and fine sea salt, a mix until you remove all the lumps. The batter will be now thick and dense.
6. Spoon one third of the whipped egg whites into the batter and mix to soften it, then fold the rest of the whipped egg whites.
7. Add the sliced pear to the cake batter.
8. Grease a 22 cm/9in ring cake mould or a 20 cm round cake mould and dust it with flour. Shake off the excess flour.
9. Scrape the cake batter into the prepared mould and transfer to the hot oven. Bake for about 50 minutes, until golden brown on top.
10. Remove from the oven and let it cool down completely.
11. Dust with powdered sugar before serving.
12. It keeps at room temperature on your counter for 4 to 5 days, just keep it covered with a clean tea towel.

## **Notes**

In this recipe I'm keeping the measurements in grams, because the amount of ricotta in a cup can vary considerably depending on its freshness, quality, and brand.