

# MEL'S FLUFFY LASAGNA, FRESH PASTA AND 15 MINUTE SAUCE

If you are using boxed lasagna noodles use a big pot with plenty of boiling salted water. Pace the noodles in the boiling water and cook for a maximum of five minutes, if you cook longer you get soggy lasagna. If you are using fresh pasta cook no more then two minutes.

Making pasta is easy and tastes better then boxed pasta

## Easy Pasta

### Ingredients

- 3 1/2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 4 extra-large eggs

### Directions

Mound the flour in the center of a large wooden cutting board. Make a well in the middle of the flour, add the eggs. Using a fork, beat together the eggs and begin to incorporate the flour starting with the inner rim of the well. As you incorporate the eggs, keep pushing the flour up to retain the well shape (do not worry if it looks messy). The dough will come together in a shaggy mass when about half of the flour is incorporated.

Start kneading the dough with both hands, primarily using the palms of your hands. Add more flour, in 1/2-cup increments, if the dough is too sticky. Once the dough is a cohesive mass, remove the dough from the board and scrape up any left over dry bits. Lightly flour the board and continue kneading for 3 more minutes. The dough should be elastic and a little sticky. Continue to knead for another 3 minutes, remembering to dust your board with flour when necessary. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and set aside for 20 minutes at room temperature. I put the dough through my pasta machine gradually reducing until it goes through on the number 2 setting. after the first pass on the pasta machine, I fold the dough in thirds so the dough is square and the with width of the pasta machine. Remember to sprinkle flour on your dough each time before you put through past machine to avoid sticking. Place the pasta on a sheet of parchment paper while you make the next steps. If you don't have a pasta machine you can use a rolling pin or a wine bottle filled with water ( be sure to remove the label and wash thoroughly. I find wine bottles half filled with water make an excellent rolling pin.

Note: Do not skip the kneading or resting portion of this recipe, they are essential for a light pasta.

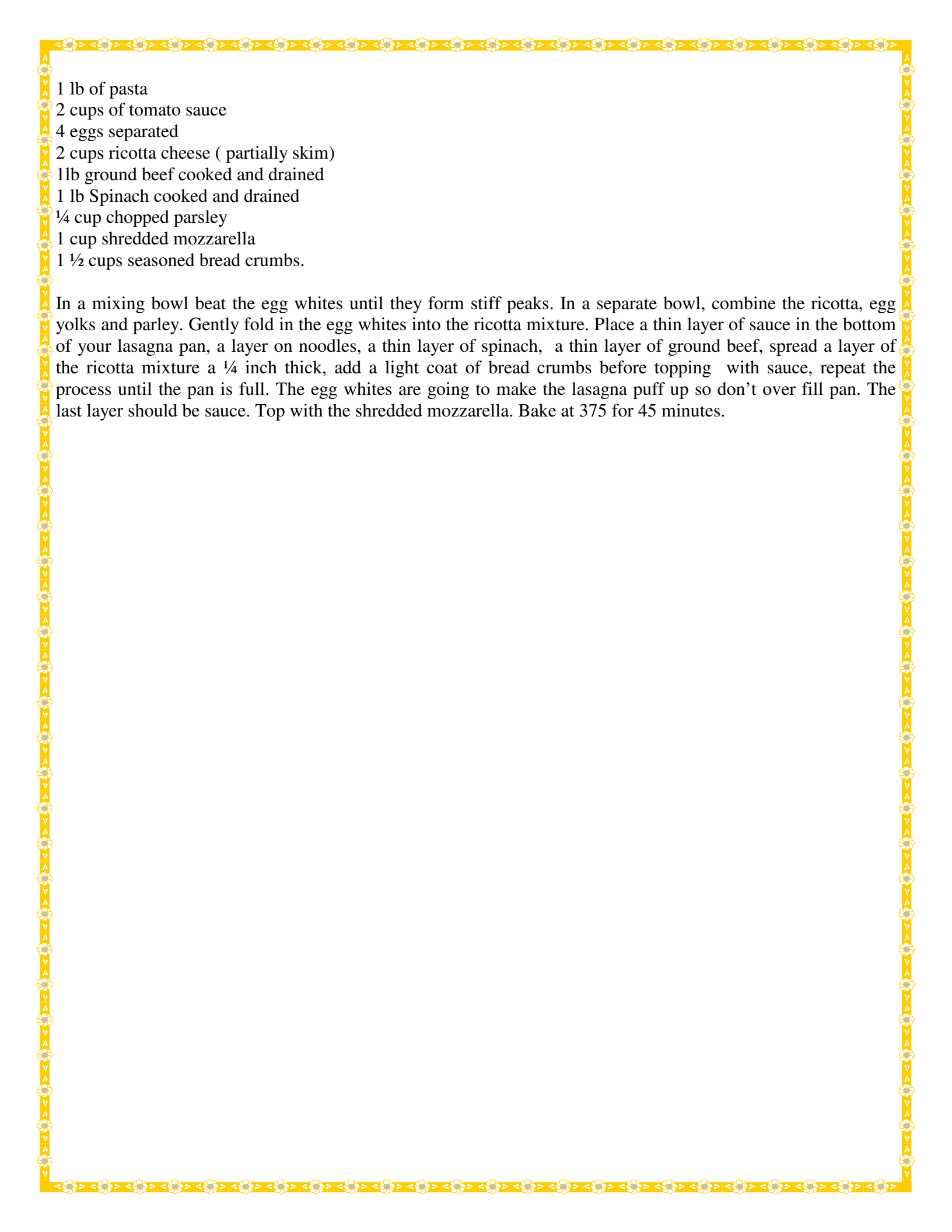
## Easy Tomato sauce.

### Ingredients

- 1 can peeled San Marzano Tomatoes ( make sure they are peeled)
- 3 cloves of garlic chopped fine
- ¼ of a cup of chopped fresh parsley
- 1 onion chopped fine
- ¼ cup of olive oil
- 2 sprigs of fresh thyme
- 8 fresh basil leaves chopped fine
- 1teaspoon of dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon of dried crushed red pepper flakes.

In a large sauté pan heat the olive oils and brown the onions. When the onions have a light golden color add the garlic, basil, parsley, thyme and oregano. Coon together until you can smell the herbs. Add the tomatoes and break up the tomatoes, add the pepper flakes and simmer for 15 minutes.

## Fluffy Lasagna.

- 
- 1 lb of pasta
  - 2 cups of tomato sauce
  - 4 eggs separated
  - 2 cups ricotta cheese (partially skim)
  - 1lb ground beef cooked and drained
  - 1 lb Spinach cooked and drained
  - ¼ cup chopped parsley
  - 1 cup shredded mozzarella
  - 1 ½ cups seasoned bread crumbs.

In a mixing bowl beat the egg whites until they form stiff peaks. In a separate bowl, combine the ricotta, egg yolks and parsley. Gently fold in the egg whites into the ricotta mixture. Place a thin layer of sauce in the bottom of your lasagna pan, a layer on noodles, a thin layer of spinach, a thin layer of ground beef, spread a layer of the ricotta mixture a ¼ inch thick, add a light coat of bread crumbs before topping with sauce, repeat the process until the pan is full. The egg whites are going to make the lasagna puff up so don't over fill pan. The last layer should be sauce. Top with the shredded mozzarella. Bake at 375 for 45 minutes.