

Recipes

- [Lasagne](#)
- [Chicken pasta bake](#)
- [Chocolate sponge cake](#)
- [Chocolate Brownies](#)
- [Banana Bread](#)

Lasagne



Ingredients

For the ragu

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 900g/2lb beef mince
- 2 onions, roughly chopped
- 4 sticks celery, diced (optional)
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 level tbsp plain flour
- 150ml/¼ pint beef stock
- 1 tbsp redcurrant jelly (optional) or 1 tsp caster sugar
- 3 tbsp tomato purée
- 1 tbsp chopped thyme
- 2 x 400g tins chopped tomatoes

For the white sauce

- 50g/2oz butter

- 50g/2oz plain flour
- 750ml/1¼ pints hot milk
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 50g/2oz Parmesan, finely grated
- salt and freshly ground black pepper

For the lasagne

- 12 lasagne sheets
 - 75g/3oz mature cheddar, grated
-

Steps

1 - Preheat the oven to 160C/140C Fan

2 - For the ragu, heat a large frying pan until hot and add the oil. Cook the mince until browned all over. Remove from the heat and transfer to a plate.

3 - Add the onion, celery (if using) and garlic to the pan and cook until softened. Return the meat to the pan and stir in the flour. Add the stock and bring to the boil. Add the redcurrant jelly (or sugar), tomato purée and thyme, then stir well.

4 - Stir in the tinned tomatoes. Bring to the boil again, cover and simmer in the oven for 1-½ hours, or until the beef is tender.

5 - For the white sauce, melt the butter in a saucepan. Add the flour and cook over the heat for one minute. Gradually whisk in the hot milk, whisking until thickened. Add the Dijon mustard and parmesan cheese and season well with salt and pepper.

6 - For the lasagne, put one third of the meat sauce in the base of a 2.3 litre/4 pint shallow ovenproof dish. Spoon one third of the white sauce on top. Season with salt and pepper. Arrange one layer of lasagne sheets on top.

7 - Spoon half of the remaining meat sauce on top and then half of the white sauce. Season with salt and pepper. Put another layer of lasagne sheets on top, then the remaining meat sauce and remaining white sauce. Sprinkle over the cheddar.

8 - Cover and place in the fridge for 6 hours before cooking so that the pasta can start to soften.

9 - Preheat the oven to 200C/180C Fan/Gas 6.

10 - Cook in the middle of the oven for about 45 minutes - or until golden brown on top, bubbling around the edges and the pasta is soft.

Chicken pasta bake



Ingredients

- butter, for greasing
- 250g/9oz penne
- 1 onion, roughly chopped
- 3 skinless, boneless chicken breasts, cut into thin strips roughly the size of your little finger
- 1 tbsp paprika
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- salt and freshly ground black pepper

For the sauce

- 50g/1¾oz butter
- 50g/1¾oz plain flour
- 750ml/1 pint 6 fl oz hot milk (see tip)

- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 100g/3½oz Parmesan cheese, coarsely grated
- 2 large tomatoes, deseeded and cut into small cubes

Steps

- 1 - Preheat the oven to 220C/200C Fan/Gas 7. Butter a shallow 1.75 litre/3 pint ovenproof dish.
- 2 - Cook the penne with the onion in boiling, salted water according to the packet instructions. Drain, refresh in cold water and leave to drain again in the colander.
- 3 - Put the chicken strips in a resealable freezer bag with the paprika and a little salt and pepper, seal the bag and shake to coat.
- 4 - Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large frying pan and quickly fry the chicken over a high heat for about 2 minutes until golden-brown and just cooked through (you may need to do this in batches). Using a slotted spoon, transfer the fried chicken to a plate and set aside.
- 5 - To make the sauce, melt the butter in a large saucepan, add the flour and whisk together to form a roux. Cook for 1 minute, then gradually add the hot milk, whisking over a high heat until the sauce is smooth and thickened, and allow to boil for 4 minutes. Stir in the mustard and half the cheese and season with salt and pepper.
- 6 - Add the pasta and onion to the sauce in the pan and stir together. Spoon half this mixture into the dish, arrange the chicken strips over the top and spoon the remaining pasta and sauce on top of the chicken. Scatter over the tomatoes and then top with the remaining cheese. Bake in the oven for about 20 minutes until piping hot and golden-brown on top.

Chocolate sponge cake



Ingredients

For the cake

- 50g/2oz cocoa powder
- 6 tbsp boiling water
- 3 free-range eggs
- 4 tbsp milk
- 175g/6oz self-raising flour
- 1 rounded tsp baking powder
- 100g/4oz baking spread or soft butter
- 300g/10oz natural caster sugar

For the icing and filling

- 150g/5oz dark chocolate, broken into small pieces
- 150ml/5fl oz double cream
- 3 tbsp apricot jam
- icing sugar, to dust

Steps

1 - Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4 and grease and line two 20cm/8in sandwich tins with baking parchment.

2 - Put the cocoa powder and boiling water into a large bowl and mix well to make a paste. Add the remaining ingredients and beat again until combined. This can also be done in a food processor, but take care not to over whisk. Divide the cake mixture between the prepared tins. Bake for about 25-30 minutes, or until well risen and shrinking away from the sides of the tin.

3 - Meanwhile, for the icing and filling, measure the chocolate and cream together in a bowl and stand the bowl over a pan of simmering water for about 10 minutes, or until melted. Stir from time to time. Set aside and leave until cool and almost set.

4 - Once baked, remove the cakes from the oven and allow to cool completely. Spread the tops of each cake with apricot jam. Fill the cakes with half of the icing and spread the remainder on top. Draw large "S" shapes over the cake with a palette knife to give a swirl effect. Dust with icing sugar and serve in slices.

Chocolate Brownies



Ingredients

- 360g (12 1/2 oz) Bournville plain chocolate (2 x 180g packets), broken into pieces
- 225g (8oz) butter, cubed, plus extra for greasing
- 225g (8oz) light muscovado sugar
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 75g (3oz) self-raising flour
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 75g (3oz) chocolate chips

Steps

1 - Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C Fan/Gas 4. Grease and line a 30 x 23cm (12 x 9in) traybake tin with non-stick baking paper.

2 - Place the chocolate and butter in a large heatproof bowl. Place the bowl over a pan of simmering water until melted. Stir to combine.

3 - Remove from the heat and add the sugar and eggs. Mix well until smooth, then add the flour and vanilla and mix again. Stir in the chocolate chips.

4 - Pour the chocolate mixture into the prepared tin and bake for about 45 minutes, until well risen and set around the edges, with a slightly soft centre.

5 - Leave to cool in the tin, then slice into 24 squares.

Banana Bread



Ingredients

- 1 ripe banana (peeled weight 100g/4oz)
- 1 tbsp milk
- 50g soft butter or baking spread
- 75g plain flour
- 75g caster sugar OR coconut sugar
- ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
- ½ tsp baking powder
- 1 free-range egg
- 50g dark chocolate chips

To decorate (optional)

- 50g/2oz dark chocolate

Steps

- 1 - Preheat the oven 160C Fan. Grease and line a 450g loaf tin with baking paper.
- 2 - Use a fork to mash the peeled banana in a mixing bowl. Add the remaining cake ingredients (except the chocolate chips) and beat with an electric hand whisk until combined and smooth.
- 3 - Stir in the chocolate chips and spoon the mixture into the prepared loaf tin. Level the top.
- 4 - Bake for 40-45 minutes or until well risen, shrinking away from the sides of the tin and golden-brown.
- 5 - Set aside to cool for 10 minutes, then remove from the tin and leave to cool on a wire rack.
- 6 - For the optional decoration, break the chocolate into small pieces and add to a heatproof bowl.
- 7 - Melt the chocolate in the bowl over a pan of simmering water (ensuring that the bowl does not touch the water). Stir regularly, until almost completely melted, then remove from the heat. The heat of the bowl will melt any remaining lumps.
- 8 - Spoon the melted chocolate into a piping bag and pipe zig-zags across the top of the loaf. Set aside for the chocolate to set. Slice and serve.