

White Lasagna

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Inspired by a lunch at Taverna del Lupo, Gubbio, Italy

1 pound slivered parma cotto ham
1 ½ pound Italian Fontina cheese, grated, divided
½ pound sliced porcini mushrooms
1 pound fresh lasagna noodles (recipe below)
1 cup grated Parmesan, plus extra for garnish
3 cups béchamel sauce (recipe below)

Fresh Pasta Noodles:

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

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.

Cut dough into quarters and working with 1 qtr at a time, run through a pasta machine to setting 6. Keep unworked pasta dough covered in plastic wrap until ready to use. Hang each sheet on drying rack while working on next sheet.

Béchamel sauce:

4 tablespoons butter
1 tablespoon black truffle oil
4 tablespoons all-purpose flour
4 cups milk
2 teaspoons salt

In a medium saucepan, heat the butter over medium-low heat until melted. Stir in the truffle oil until incorporated. Add the flour and stir until smooth. Over medium heat, cook until the mixture turns a light, golden sandy color, about 6 to 7 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat the milk in a separate pan until just about to boil. Add the hot milk to the butter mixture 1 cup at a time, whisking continuously until very smooth. Bring to a boil. Cook 10 minutes, stirring constantly, then remove from heat. Season with salt and set aside until ready to use.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the fresh lasagna to the boiling water and cook until al dente, 2-3 minutes. Remove and place on baking sheet coated with olive oil. Toss the pasta to coat it completely.

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F.

In a bowl, mix the Parma Ham and 1 pound Fontina well. In a 9 by 12-inch baking dish, begin laying down the pasta. Smooth on a layer of the cheese mixture and layer 1/3 of the porcini mushrooms. Add another layer of pasta and repeat this process until you reach the top of the dish. The final layer should be remaining ½ pound of fontina and ½ cup parmesan.

Cover with foil and place in the oven. Bake for 45 minutes. Remove the foil and let brown for 15 more minutes. Let stand for 15 minutes before slicing and serving.