

# Winter greens & ricotta lasagne

**Season:** Winter

**Type:** Big Dish

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Serves:** 30 tastes in the classroom  
or 10 serves at home

**Fresh from the garden:** fennel, fresh herbs, garlic, kale, onions, silverbeet, winter greens

**Recipe Source:** Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation

This is a great way to use winter greens to make a hearty meal. In kitchen classes, the pasta should be made by one class for the next class, so it has time to rest. This dish lets children demonstrate a wide range of cooking techniques, with each step building up to the final assembly and a glorious baked dish hot out of the oven.

## Equipment:

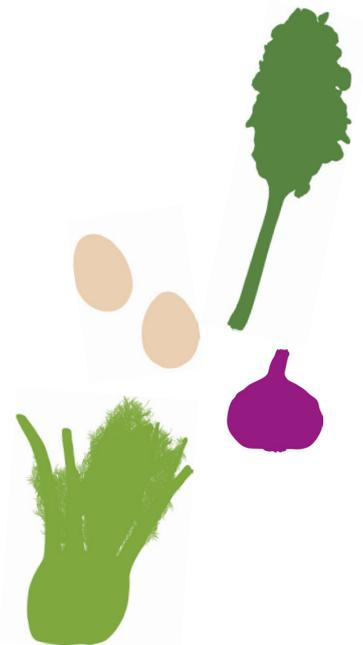
pasta machine  
food processor  
small bowl  
plastic wrap  
cook's knife  
chopping board  
clean tea towels  
2 large frying pans  
wooden spoon  
large pot of water with lid,  
for boiling pasta  
fork  
grater  
zester  
large mixing bowl  
2 large baking dishes,  
5–8 cm deep  
tongs or large slotted spoon

## Ingredients:

15 stalks silverbeet  
2 small bulbs fennel  
20 Tuscan kale leaves  
2 large handfuls of leafy winter  
greens (e.g. rapa, spinach)  
3 onions  
6 cloves of garlic  
3 tbsp olive oil, for frying  
fresh herbs  
1 nutmeg  
100 g parmesan  
1.5 kg ricotta  
2 eggs  
1 lemon  
1 cup extra virgin olive oil, for  
dressing  
3 × 400 ml tins Italian tomatoes  
salt and pepper to taste

## For the pasta:

200 g '00' flour  
2 eggs



## What to do:

- Pre-heat oven to 190°C.

## To make the pasta:

- Fix the pasta machine tightly to a suitable bench and set up the food processor.
- Add the flour to the bowl of the food processor. Turn the motor on, crack the eggs into a small bowl then add them to the food processor.

- Process for a few minutes until the dough clings together and feels quite springy.
- Tip the dough onto a clean, dry workbench. Knead the dough for a few minutes. Wrap it in plastic wrap and let it rest for at least 1 hour in the fridge.

#### **For the filling:**

- Wash all the greens and herbs.
- Separate the green leaves and white stalks of the silverbeet. Slice and chop the white ribs into small pieces. Finely slice the green leaves.
- Remove the stem from the Tuscan kale and add it to your compost.
- Finely chop the onions, 3 cloves of garlic and fennel.
- Divide onions, fennel and garlic into two batches and gently sauté each batch for 2–3 minutes in 2 tbs of olive oil. Then add both batches to the pan along with the chopped ribs of silverbeet, stir and continue to cook gently.
- Add all green leaves to the pan and stir to coat the leaves in oil. Sauté for another 3 minutes.
- Remove from heat and allow to cool.
- Place a large pot of water with lid on stove to boil.

#### **For the tomato sauce:**

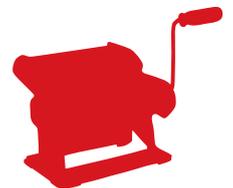
- Finely chop the remaining garlic and sauté in 1 tbs of olive oil with a pinch of salt and pepper. Then add 3 tins of tomatoes and allow to simmer for 20 minutes.
- Turn off heat and mash any whole tomatoes with a fork.

#### **For the ricotta filling:**

- Grate the nutmeg finely. Grate the parmesan. Zest the lemon.
- In your large mixing bowl, combine ricotta, eggs, grated nutmeg, 50 g of parmesan, lemon zest and salt and pepper to taste. Mix well.

#### **To roll the pasta:**

- Clear a large space on the workbench alongside the pasta machine. Make sure all surfaces are clean and dry.
- Unwrap the cold dough and cut it into 6 pieces. Keep one piece out and fold the others back in the plastic wrap to stay moist.
- Shape the dough into a round ball and press it down on the board to flatten it. Fold in both sides, in rough thirds, to make a rectangle about 8 cm wide with folded sides.
- Set the rollers on the pasta machine to the widest setting and pass the folded dough through. Keep it aligned so that the folds run vertically up the rectangle as you pass it through. You should have a longer rectangle.
- With the long side of the rectangle nearest you, fold left and right sides in again, in thirds, to form a shorter, fatter rectangle. Again, place it with the folds running vertically up the piece of dough and roll it through the rollers. Do this 3–4 times, folding long sides into the centre each time.



- Change the machine roller setting to the next-thickest setting and pass the dough through another 3–4 times. You do not need to fold it.
- If the dough starts to stick, sprinkle a pinch of flour onto your hands and smooth it onto the strips of dough. Be very sparing with flour.
- Continue changing the settings and passing the lengths of dough through until the dough has passed through the second thinnest setting. Don't fold it again after the first (thickest) step.
- If the dough gets too long to handle comfortably, cut it into 2–3 pieces, then continue to roll each piece separately.
- Let your pasta dry on clean tea towels while you work on the other pieces of dough.
- Cut the lengths into lasagne-sized sheets.

#### **To assemble the lasagne:**

- Carefully drop your lasagne sheets a couple at a time into your boiling water. Once they float to the surface, remove them from the pot with tongs or a slotted spoon, and place on a tea towel to dry.
- Cover the bottom of each baking dish with dry lasagne sheets.
- Add a 1 cm thick layer of the ricotta mix.
- Cover ricotta with a layer of tomato sauce.
- Add a layer of greens.
- Repeat the above process.
- Add another layer of lasagne – you should be at the top of the baking tray.
- Add a thin layer of ricotta and a final layer of sauce.
- Top with remaining grated parmesan.
- Place in the oven for 45–55 minutes, until golden brown on top.

