

An Unlikely Culinary Column: Cooking With and Without Garlic and Onions

By Karen Kain

I have been preparing Italian food since I first started cooking. Who hasn't made spaghetti as their beginner no fail dish? When I was 19, I made homemade spaghetti sauce from scratch for the first time. I remember reading the directions and not knowing whether a clove of garlic was the small piece or the entire bulb; needless to say phone calls were made. Who knew that someday I would be sharing recipes with others?

I recently made a meal for some houseguests and I needed to omit garlic and onion from my recipe. I have always found these to be two of the basic ingredients to everything I cook. Nothing fills up the kitchen with fabulous aroma better than garlic and onion sautéing. I decided to experiment with two lasagna dishes making one with garlic and onion and the

Hearty Lasagna with Peppers Ingredients

- 1 Pound grass fed beef
- 1 Pound Italian sausage
- 1 Pound sliced pepperoni
- 3 Tablespoons coconut oil
- 3/4 Cup celery, chopped
- 1 Red pepper, chopped
- 1 Yellow pepper, chopped
- 2 Jalapeño peppers, seeds removed and diced
- 1 (32 ounce) canned tomatoes
- 1 (12 ounce) can tomato paste
- 1 Tablespoon dried oregano
- 1/2 Cup fresh Italian parsley, leaves only, chopped
- To taste salt & pepper
- Dash cayenne pepper
- 2 Cups water
- 16 Ounces lasagna sheets, cooked
- 16 Ounces ricotta cheese
- 16 Ounces mozzarella cheese shredded

Directions:

Heat up a large skillet on medium high and add the sausage and beef then cook until browned. Add the pepperoni and stir to fully incorporate. Remove from the skillet and set aside. Heat up 3 tablespoons of coconut oil until melted and add the bell peppers, jalapeno and celery then cook until soft, about 5 minutes. Add the canned

tomatoes, tomato paste, oregano and parsley. Add the cayenne, salt & pepper and stir to fully combine. Return the meat back to the mixture. Add the water and turn down the heat to a simmer and cook for 30 minutes. Heat up your oven to 375°F. Cook the lasagna sheets per the directions. Line the bottom of a lasagna casserole dish with a layer of prepared sauce. Top with a layer of noodles and ricotta and mozzarella cheeses. Repeat this process twice: sauce, noodles, cheeses making 3 layers. Bake for 45-55 minutes until the lasagna is browned and bubbling hot. Remove from the oven and allow to stand for at least 10 minutes and serve.



other without. I did some research on what people were substituting these ingredients with (you know who you are) and I must tell you how pleasantly surprised I was with the results.

The recipes I am sharing with you this week originated from Trisha Yearwood's Cowboy Lasagna dish. I tweaked it a bit and then made a second lasagna substituting jalapeno peppers, celery, yellow and red peppers in lieu of garlic and onions. I am definitely eager to play with these ingredients again. Both dishes were a hit. If you like to make lasagna I encourage you to give either or both of these dishes a try.

Cowboy Lasagna Ingredients:

- 1 Pound lean ground beef
- 1 Pound Italian sausage
- 1 Onion, finely chopped
- 1 Garlic clove, minced
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1 Pound sliced pepperoni
- 2 (16 ounce) cans dice tomatoes
- 1 (12 ounce) can tomato paste
- 2 Cups water
- 2 Teaspoons salt
- 1/2 Teaspoon pepper
- 1 Tablespoon dried oregano
- 16 Ounces lasagna noodles
- 16 Ounces ricotta cheese
- 16 Ounces mozzarella cheese, shredded

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 375° F. In a large skillet brown the beef and sausage, leaving the meat chunky. Once the meats are almost fully cooked add the pepperoni and stir to fully combine. Remove the meats and set aside. In the same skillet heat up the oil and add the onion and garlic then sauté for 5 minutes. Add the tomatoes, tomato paste, water, salt, pepper and oregano then simmer uncovered for 30 minutes. Cook and drain lasagna sheets according to package directions. In a 13 x 9-inch pan, spread 1 cup of the prepared sauce. Alternate layers of noodles, sauce, and cheeses, ending with sauce, and top with mozzarella. Bake for 40 minutes or until lightly browned and bubbling. Allow to stand for 10 minutes before serving.



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