

Mother, teacher finds time to make speedy lasagna

Pasta has certainly come a long way from its humble origins. Although some people might have thought it was invented by Chef Boyardee, museum books and ancient documents attest to pasta being one of the oldest and most revered foods, eaten as early as 5000 B.C. Indeed, pasta was not discovered by Marco Polo in China and brought back to Italy, for historical records show it was being eaten in Rome in 1284, almost 20 years before Marco Polo left on his famous journey.

Another interesting historical tidbit is that fettuccine made with cheese, butter, cream and raw egg yolk was not invented by a restaurateur named Alfredo but was eaten by the Romans much as it is now in the year 1200, and was known by the catchy name of "lagano cum caseo."

Contrary to what a lot of children and, I daresay, some adults might believe, there is a vast world of pasta above and beyond Kraft Macaroni and Spaghetti-O's. This week's Winner Dinner, submitted by Susan Sweeney of Birmingham, offers you an alternative to the delicious and unbelievably easy recipe for lasagna.

Sweeney teaches math and social studies to fifth grade students at Brookside School Cranbrook. The mother of two children, she is working on a doctorate at Wayne State University. Her busy life as wife, mother, teacher and student doesn't leave her with much time to cook, but she has found innovative recipes that are easy to make and still delicious and nutritious.

ALTHOUGH LASAGNA is usually very time consuming to prepare, Sweeney's recipe solves that problem, as it should take no more than 20 minutes to put together. The secret to this speedy assembly is that the noodles are cooked in the sauce. A green salad tossed with a light coating of poppyseed dressing and a dessert of healthy chocolate chip cookies guarantee that no one will leave the table hungry!

Thank you, Susan Sweeney, for taking the time out of your busy schedule to share one of your family's favorite Winter Dinners with us. Perhaps from now on, the Prince can take his spaghetti and retire and Wednesdays will henceforth be known as Sweeney's Lasagna Day.

Submit your recipes, to be considered for publication in this column or elsewhere, to: Winner



family-tested winner dinner

Betsy Brethen



STEPHEN CANTRELL/staff photographer

Susan Sweeney of Birmingham assembles Unbelievable Lasagna ingredients in 20 minutes. She serves the pasta dish with Tossed Salad with Poppyseed Dressing and Wheat Germ and Oatmeal Cookies.

Dinner, P.O. Box 3503, Birmingham 48012. All submissions become the property of the publisher. Rice, winner receives an apron with the words "Winner Dinner Winner" on it.

Recipes are printed the same

size so that you may clip and save them in a three-ring binder. Use a paper punch to make holes in the clipping or paste the clipping on a blank sheet of three-ring notebook paper. Another option is to simply file the clippings in a folder with pockets that will hold them.

Observer & Eccentric Winner Dinner

Recipes

UNBELIEVABLE LASAGNA

This dish takes about 20 minutes to assemble. It can be made in the morning, covered and refrigerated until placed in the oven. Be sure to bake it on a cookie sheet in case the tomato sauce bubbles over the sides of the dish. It is delicious reheated and amply feeds 6-8 people.

1 1/2 pounds ground beef, browned and well drained
32-ounce jar, thick spaghetti sauce
16-ounce can tomato sauce
1 carton low-fat cottage cheese
2 eggs
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
8-10 ounces shredded mozzarella cheese
8 ounces uncooked lasagna noodles

Mix the browned meat with the spaghetti and tomato sauce. In another bowl, mix together the cottage cheese, eggs and cheeses. Arrange 1/3 of the sauce in the bottom of a 13x9-inch pan that has been sprayed with a nonstick spray. Arrange a layer of uncooked noodles on top and then half of the cheesy egg mixture. Repeat layers and end with a layer of sauce on the top. Noodles must be buried in the sauce. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 1/2 hours. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving.

TOSSED SALAD WITH POPPYSEED DRESSING

This recipe makes a 1/2 cup of dressing but can be doubled to make a larger quantity.

4 tablespoons salad oil or olive oil
2 tablespoons vinegar
1 teaspoon salt
1 clove of garlic, minced
fresh ground pepper to taste
1/2 teaspoon poppy seeds

Shake ingredients together in a bottle until the ingredients are well mixed. Serve over a green salad filled with lots of fiber-filled crunchy veggies, like sliced carrots, celery, raw broccoli and cauliflower florets. Cut up a tomato, chop up a bit of red onion and add some minced anchovy hearts for a little change of pace. Toss and enjoy.

WHEAT GERM AND OATMEAL COOKIES

This recipe offers a healthier alternative to the fried and true Toll House chocolate chip cookie.

1/2 cup butter or margarine, softened
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1 egg
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1/2 cup wheat germ
1/2 cup flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 cup chocolate chips
1/2 cup oatmeal (uncooked)

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. In a large bowl, cream the butter or margarine with the sugars. Beat in the egg and vanilla. Mix in the wheat germ, flour and baking powder. Add the oats and chocolate chips. Mix well. Place heaping teaspoons of the batter on ungreased cookie sheets. Bake approximately 15 minutes, depending on the size of the cookies, until golden brown. Remove from the baking sheet as soon as the cookies are taken out of the oven.

Shopping List

1 1/2 pounds ground beef
32-ounce jar, thick spaghetti sauce
16-ounce can tomato sauce
16-ounce carton cottage cheese
2 eggs
Parmesan cheese
10 ounces shredded Mozzarella cheese
8 ounces lasagna
sliced or olive oil
vinegar
salt
1 garlic clove
poppy seeds
lettuce — iceberg, romaine and/or red leaf
carrots
celery
broccoli
cauliflower
tomato
red onion
minced anchovy hearts
butter or margarine
brown sugar
granulated sugar
vanilla
wheat germ
flour
baking powder
chocolate chips
oatmeal

Notes

cooking calendar

• **Cooking calendar**
Jane Freeman, author of "Dinner Party," will appear at noon Wednesday, Feb. 14, at Williams-Sonoma at Somerset Mall in Troy. Freeman offers a complete guide to entertaining small groups of 4-12 with simple menus that range from one-dish suppers to three-course

evenings with lavish desserts. "Dinner Party" also features ways to present food, information on gourmet ingredients, cooking shortcuts

based on the food processor and microwave, and a "Dinner Planner" that helps hosts and hostesses get and stay organized.

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