

## Million Dollar Lasagna: The Ultimate Creamy, Cheesy Italian Comfort Food

These Sheet Pan Quesadillas Are My Favorite Way to Feed a Crowd Fast



**TIME**  
**25 min**

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**SAVE**  
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**ChefManiac**

### INGREDIENTS

Swaps and Notes:

**Meat:** For a lighter option, substitute the beef and sausage with ground turkey or a mix of finely chopped mushrooms and lentils for a vegetarian version.

**Crème Fraîche:** If you can't find crème fraîche, substitute with full-fat sour cream. It provides a similar tang and richness.

**Marinara:** While I love using quality jarred sauce for convenience, feel free to use a homemade sauce base. If you're a sauce purist, check out my [Classic Spaghetti Recipe with Homemade Sauce](#) for inspiration.

**No-Boil Noodles:** If using no-boil noodles, ensure your sauce is slightly thinner than usual, as the noodles will absorb more liquid during baking.

? Directions: Million Dollar Lasagna:

1. Prep and Preheat:

Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C).

Cook the lasagna noodles according to package directions until al dente. Drain and set aside.

Lightly grease a 9x13 inch baking dish.

2. Cook the Meat Sauce:

In a large skillet, brown the ground beef, Italian sausage, and chopped onion over medium-high heat.

Drain off any excess grease. This is crucial for preventing a watery lasagna.

Add the minced garlic and cook for 1 minute until fragrant.

Stir in the tomato paste, marinara sauce, Italian seasoning, red pepper flakes (if using), salt, and pepper.

Bring to a simmer, then reduce heat and let the sauce simmer gently for 10 minutes to allow the flavors to meld.

### 3. Mix the Cheese Filling:

In a large mixing bowl, combine the ricotta cheese, softened cream cheese, crème fraîche, egg, Parmesan cheese, 1 cup of the mozzarella cheese, and chopped fresh parsley.

Stir vigorously until the mixture is completely smooth and creamy. This is the "million dollar" layer, so make sure the cream cheese is fully incorporated.

### 4. Assemble the Lasagna:

**Bottom Layer:** Spread a thin layer of the meat sauce over the bottom of your prepared 9x13 dish.

**Noodle Layer:** Arrange a layer of cooked lasagna noodles over the sauce. (Usually 4 noodles for this size pan).

**Cheese Layer:** Spread half of the creamy cheese mixture evenly over the noodles.

**Sauce Layer:** Spoon half of the remaining meat sauce over the cheese layer.

**Mozzarella Layer:** Sprinkle a generous layer of the remaining 1 cup of mozzarella cheese over the sauce.

**Repeat:** Add another layer of noodles, the remaining creamy cheese mixture, and the remaining meat sauce.

**Top Layer:** Finish with a final layer of noodles, then top everything with extra mozzarella and Parmesan cheese for a perfect golden crust.

### 5. Bake and Serve:

Cover the dish tightly with aluminum foil.

Bake for 25 minutes.

Remove the foil and bake for an additional 15-20 minutes, or until the cheese is bubbly, melted, and golden brown.

**Rest:** The hardest part! Let the lasagna rest on the counter for at least 10 minutes before slicing.

This allows the layers to set, making for cleaner, more beautiful slices.

Garnish with fresh parsley before serving.

? Tips for Success:

**Drain the Meat:** Seriously, don't skip draining the grease after browning the meat. Too much fat will separate and make your lasagna oily.

## DIRECTIONS

1. Prep time: 25 minutes | Cook time: 45 minutes | Servings: 8-10
2. Prep and Preheat: Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C).
3. Cook the lasagna noodles according to package directions until al dente. Drain and set aside.
4. Lightly grease a 9x13 inch baking dish.
5. Cook the Meat Sauce: In a large skillet, brown the ground beef, Italian sausage, and chopped onion over medium-high heat.
6. Drain off any excess grease. This is crucial for preventing a watery lasagna.
7. Add the minced garlic and cook for 1 minute until fragrant.
8. Stir in the tomato paste, marinara sauce, Italian seasoning, red pepper flakes (if using), salt, and pepper.
9. Bring to a simmer, then reduce heat and let the sauce simmer gently for 10 minutes to allow the flavors to meld.
10. Mix the Cheese Filling: In a large mixing bowl, combine the ricotta cheese, softened cream cheese, crème fraîche, egg, Parmesan cheese, 1 cup of the mozzarella cheese, and chopped fresh parsley.
11. Stir vigorously until the mixture is completely smooth and creamy. This is the "million dollar" layer, so make sure the cream cheese is fully incorporated.
12. Assemble the Lasagna: **Bottom Layer:** Spread a thin layer of the meat sauce over the bottom of your prepared 9x13 dish.

13. Noodle : Layer: Arrange a layer of cooked lasagna noodles over the sauce. (Usually 4 noodles for this size pan).
14. Cheese : Layer: Spread half of the creamy cheese mixture evenly over the noodles.
15. Sauce : Layer: Spoon half of the remaining meat sauce over the cheese layer.
16. Mozzarella : Layer: Sprinkle a generous layer of the remaining 1 cup of mozzarella cheese over the sauce.
17. Repeat: Add another layer of noodles, the remaining creamy cheese mixture, and the remaining meat sauce.
18. Top : Layer: Finish with a final layer of noodles, then top everything with extra mozzarella and Parmesan cheese for a perfect golden crust.
19. Bake and Serve: Cover the dish tightly with aluminum foil.
20. Bake for 25 minutes.
21. Remove the foil and bake for an additional 15-20 minutes, or until the cheese is bubbly, melted, and golden brown.
22. Rest: The hardest part! Let the lasagna rest on the counter for at least 10 minutes before slicing. This allows the layers to set, making for cleaner, more beautiful slices.
23. Garnish with fresh parsley before serving.
24. ? Tips for Success: Drain the Meat: Seriously, don't skip draining the grease after browning the meat. Too much fat will separate and make your lasagna oily.
25. Soften the : Cream Cheese: Your cream cheese must be fully softened to room temperature before mixing. Otherwise, you'll end up with lumps in your filling.

## SWAPS & NOTES

**Crème Fraîche:** If you can't find crème fraîche, substitute with full-fat sour cream.

It provides a similar tang and richness.

**Marinara:** While I love using quality jarred sauce for convenience, feel free to use a homemade sauce base.

If you're a sauce purist, check out my [Classic Spaghetti Recipe with Homemade Sauce](#) for inspiration.

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS

**Drain the Meat:** Seriously, don't skip draining the grease after browning the meat.

Too much fat will separate and make your lasagna oily.

**Soften the Cream Cheese:** Your cream cheese must be fully softened to room temperature before mixing.

Otherwise, you'll end up with lumps in your filling.

**More recipes:** [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/million-dollar-lasagna-the-ultimate-creamy-cheesy-italian-comfort-food/>