

# Lasagna Rolls Menu

From Mel's Kitchen Cafe

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*All the recipes have been modified to feed groups of about 20 (except for the chocolate wafer cream cake; make 3 of them if it is the only dessert you are making). Keep in mind, this is just an average number. You'll want to adjust the recipes accordingly if you are feeding more than that or if the 20-ish people are big eaters/little eaters. Use the table and the recipes together – all make-ahead instructions are in the table but you may want to fill in the little details; I included the main instructions. I didn't include a recipe for steamed corn; that portion of the menu is supposed to keep things simple so remember to do just that: keep it simple.*

*Have fun!*

# \*The Plan\*

	Italian Lasagna Rolls	Divine Breadsticks	Green Salad	Creamy 5-Cup Fruit Salad	Steamed Corn	Chocolate Wafer Cake	Peaches and Cream Sensation
One Week in Advance			Prepare dressing for salad. Refrigerate.				
24 Hours in Advance	Prepare lasagna rolls according to recipe. Don't bake. Let cool, cover with greased foil and refrigerate.	Make breadstick dough. Shape and place on baking pans. Cover with greased plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.	Make croutons for salad. Store covered at room temperature. Assemble salad, all except pears, Parmesan cheese and bacon.			Assemble wafer cakes. Refrigerate until ready to serve.	
4-6 Hours Before Serving				Make salad. Refrigerate.			Make peaches and cream dessert and refrigerate until serving.
1-2 Hours Before Serving	Bake lasagna rolls. Let them rest while the breadsticks bake.	Two hours before serving, take breadsticks out of the refrigerator to let rest/puff. Bake once the lasagna rolls come out of the oven.	{30 minutes before} Top salad with pears, Parmesan cheese and bacon.		Prepare corn.		

# \*The Recipes\*

## Italian Lasagna Rolls

*\*This increased recipe will make 36 rolls. If you think you need more/less, adjust accordingly.*

### Ingredients

#### Meat Sauce:

- 1 cup chopped yellow or white onion
- 6 cloves garlic, finely minced
- 3 pounds ground turkey or beef
- 2-3 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 3 (28-ounce) cans crushed tomatoes
- 3 (15-ounce) cans tomato sauce
- 1 tablespoon dried basil
- 1 1/2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme

#### Ricotta Filling:

- 6 cups ricotta cheese (or 3 15-ounce containers)
- 3 large eggs
- 1 tablespoon dried basil
- 6 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- 24 ounces mozzarella cheese shredded, about 6 cups (reserving 1 1/2 cups for topping)
- 12 ounces Parmesan cheese finely grated, about 4-6 cups (reserving 1 cup for topping)
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 teaspoon black pepper

#### Noodles:

- 36 traditional lasagna noodles

### Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly grease three 9X13-inch baking pans and set aside.
2. In a large pot over medium heat, cook the onion, garlic, ground turkey or beef, salt and pepper, breaking the meat into small pieces. Cook until the meat is no longer pink and is cooked through, 5-7 minutes. Drain any excess grease.
3. Add the crushed tomatoes, tomato sauce, basil, oregano, and thyme and simmer over medium heat for 10-15 minutes. Add additional salt and pepper to taste.
4. While the sauce is simmering, boil the lasagna noodles (you may need to do this in batches) in a large pot of salted water according to package directions until al dente. Drain the noodles, rinse quickly under cold water and then lay the noodles flat in a single layer on waxed or parchment paper.
5. In a large bowl, stir together the ricotta cheese, egg, basil, parsley, mozzarella cheese (remember to set aside 1 1/2 cups of the mozzarella for topping later), Parmesan cheese (remember to set aside 1 cup of the Parmesan for later also), salt and pepper.
6. Gently spread a heaping spoonful of the ricotta filling down the center of each noodle. It doesn't have to cover the entire noodle, just press it into a somewhat even layer. The filling will be divided up evenly over all the noodles (I don't start rolling up the noodles until I've used up all the filling so I can add more to each noodle if need be). Spread a tablespoon or two of the red sauce down the center of each noodle on top of the creamy filling. Again, it doesn't need to be perfectly even, just drizzle/spread it across the top.
7. Spread about one cup or so of the sauce in the bottom of the prepared baking dishes. Working with one lasagna noodle at a time, roll the noodle and place seam-side down in the baking dish in four rows of three. Spread the remaining sauce over the noodles, sprinkle with the reserved cheeses and cover with aluminum foil that has been lightly coated with cooking spray (so it doesn't stick to the cheese as it bakes). Bake, covered for 35 minutes. Uncover and bake for an additional 10 minutes. Let the lasagna rolls rest for 10 minutes before serving.

# Gourmet Green Salad with Red Wine Vinaigrette

## *Ingredients*

### Salad:

- 10-12 cups mixed greens
- 1 pound white button mushrooms, sliced
- 2 ripe, fresh pears, sliced thinly (you can also use fresh strawberries, raspberries, or apples)
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced Parmesan cheese
- 1 large carrot (or about 5-6 baby carrots), thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 to 1/2 cup thinly sliced red onion
- 5-7 slices of bacon, cooked and coarsely chopped
- 3 cups of homemade croutons (see [online recipe](#) for the how-to)

### Red Wine Vinaigrette:

- 1 1/3 cups red wine vinegar
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1/2 cup red onions, finely grated (about 1/4 of a large red onion)
- 4 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 4 teaspoons salt
- ground pepper to taste
- 3 cups canola or vegetable oil

## *Directions*

1. For the salad, put mixed greens in a large salad bowl. Top with other ingredients and toss. Serve with red wine vinaigrette dressing below.
2. For the dressing, add all ingredients except oil in a blender. Blend well. While processing, slowly add the canola oil and blend well. Transfer dressing to a jar or cruet. It keeps well in the refrigerator for 1-2 weeks (although I've found it gets a little thick if it is too cold so I'll pop it in the microwave for 5-10 seconds to help thin it out before I use it if it has been in the refrigerator for several days).

# Divine Breadsticks

## *Ingredients*

- 3 cups warm water
- 2 tablespoons instant yeast
- 4 tablespoons sugar
- 6-7 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 6 tablespoons butter, melted (for the baking sheets)

## *Directions*

1. Mix all ingredients (except melted butter) in a large bowl or electric mixer and knead for three minutes. Let the dough rest for 10 minutes. Heat oven to 375 degrees. Spread melted butter onto two 11X17-inch baking sheets. Roll out the breadstick dough about 1/4 to 1/2-inch thick and cut into strips with a pizza cutter. Twist slightly if desired and place about 1/2-inch apart on the baking sheet. Sprinkle with garlic salt, herbs of choice (I vary this depending on my mood but it usually consists of rosemary, basil, or thyme in some form and crushed finely) and parmesan cheese.
2. Cover with greased plastic wrap and let rise 30 minutes. Bake 15-20 minutes at 375 degrees until golden brown.

# Creamy 5-Cup Fruit Salad

## *Ingredients*

- 3 (10-ounces each) can pineapple chunks (about 3 cups), drained
- 3 (11-ounces each) can mandarin oranges (about 3 cups), drained
- 3 medium apples, cored and chopped (about 3 cups)
- 3 cups grapes, halved
- 1 1/2 cups sour cream, light or regular
- 1 1/2 cups sweetened, shredded coconut

## *Directions*

1. Combine the fruit in a large bowl, tossing well so the apple (and other fruit that likes to brown) can get coated in the pineapple and orange juice to prevent browning. Stir in the sour cream and coconut, gently tossing to coat.
2. Refrigerate for at least 4 hours prior to serving to allow the flavors to meld together. Serve chilled. You might notice that after a day or so of sitting in the fridge, quite a bit of liquid from the fruit pools at the bottom. If eating the leftovers, I like to gently pour some of this off before eating.

# Chocolate Peanut Butter Wafer Cream Cake

## Ingredients

- 2 cups heavy whipping cream
- 1/3 cup powdered sugar
- 1/3 cup creamy peanut butter
- 1 box (about 30 cookies) thin chocolate wafer cookies

## Directions

1. In a large bowl, whip 1 1/2 cups heavy cream with the powdered sugar until soft peaks form. In a small bowl, stir the peanut butter until soft and creamy and whisk in the remaining 1/2 cup heavy cream. Whisk together until the mixture is light and fluffy. Fold the peanut butter mixture gently into the large bowl of whipped cream until well combined.
2. On a cake platter, serving tray or large plate, dab the bottom of 7 cookies with a tiny amount of cream mixture and arrange 6 of the cookies in a circle with the remaining cookie in the middle of the circle. Spread about 2/3 cup cream mixture on top of the cookies, spreading the cream outward to cover all but the outer edges of the cookies (an offset spatula really helps this process!). Repeat the layers 5 more times, each time staggering the cookie layer and topping the cake with the remaining cream. Refrigerate the cake for at least 8 hours (or up to 2 days).
3. Slice into pieces and serve chilled.

# Peaches and Cream Sensation

## Ingredients

### Crust:

- 4 sleeves graham crackers, crushed (about 5-6 cups)
- 6 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 24 tablespoons butter (3 sticks), melted

### Creamy Filling:

- 3 cups powdered sugar
- 16 ounces cream cheese, light or regular, softened to room temperature
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4 cups heavy whipping cream, chilled
- 10-12 fresh peaches, peeled, pitted and sliced thinly

## Directions

1. In a medium bowl, stir together the graham cracker crumbs and granulated sugar. Stir in the melted butter until combined. Take out 2/3 cup of the crumbs and set aside for later. Press the remaining mixture on the bottom of two 9X13-inch pan. Refrigerate the crust while preparing the rest of the dessert.
2. In a large bowl using an electric handheld mixer or in the bowl of an electric stand mixer, beat together the powdered sugar and cream cheese until light and smooth. Mix in the vanilla. Pour in the cold heavy cream and mix on low (to avoid spatters) until the mixture starts to come together. Increase the speed to medium-high and mix until the mixture is thick and fluffy.
3. Spread a thin layer of the cream filling over the chilled crust, about 1 1/2 cups of the mixture for each pan. Layer the sliced peaches over the top of the cream. Dollop the remaining cream over the top of the peaches in large blobs and spread carefully to cover the peaches completely. Spread the cream filling all the way to the edges of the pan so that the peaches are well sealed inside the cream (otherwise if prepared in advance, the air can make the peaches turn an off-brown color). Sprinkle the reserved graham cracker mixture over the top. Cover with plastic wrap and chill for at least 2 hours or up to 12 hours before serving. Cut into pieces, scoop onto a plate and serve.