Eggplant Lasagna

9 whole grain lasagna noodles
½ teaspoon vegetable oil
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1 medium onion, chopped
1 eggplant, peeled and finely chopped
3 cups chopped raw spinach
1 14½ ounce can Italian flavored tomatoes
1 24 ounce jar low-sodium marinara sauce
½ teaspoon dried basil
½ teaspoon oregano
¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
Dash salt and pepper
15-16 ounces low-fat ricotta cheese
1¾ cups shredded mozzarella cheese
1¾ cups shredded low-fat cheddar cheese

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a 9x13-inch baking pan. Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a rolling boil. Cook the lasagna noodles until tender, but still slightly firm (approximately 10 minutes); drain and set aside. Heat the oil in a large skillet and sauté the onion and garlic until golden. Add chopped eggplant to skillet and cook until very soft and tender. Add chopped spinach to the skillet and cook until wilted. Stir in the tomatoes, marinara, basil, oregano, crushed red pepper flakes, salt and pepper; simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Layer 3 noodles on bottom of pan. Spread one-third of the ricotta cheese on top of noodles, spoon one-third of sauce on top, and sprinkle with one-third mozzarella and cheddar cheese. Repeat, layering with remaining ingredients, ending with a layer of cheese. Bake 35 minutes or until cheese on top is melted and golden brown. Let casserole rest 10 minutes before cutting.

Yield: 12 servings
Nutritional Analysis: 260 calories, 11 g fat, 5 g saturated fat, 30 mg cholesterol, 600 mg sodium, 25 g carbohydrate, 6 g fiber, 8 g sugar, 18 g protein

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Kentucky Eggplant

SEASON: Late June to October.
NUTRITION FACTS: Eggplant contains small amounts of several important vitamins that are needed daily. It is very low in sodium and calories, with only 15 calories for a half cup serving.
SELECTION: Select firm, heavy eggplant with smooth, shiny, deep purple skin. Choose medium size eggplant, about 3 to 4 inches in diameter.
STORAGE: Store soon after harvest or purchase in the vegetable crisper in the refrigerator. Use within one week.
PREPARATION: Eggplant is a versatile vegetable and can be baked, broiled, grilled, fried, stuffed or used in a variety of casseroles in combination with other vegetables. It works well with tomatoes, garlic, onions, and cheese. One pound equals 3 cups diced. Eggplant should be peeled before preparation, unless it is very young and tender.

To broil or grill: Cut into three-fourth inch slices and brush with margarine or Italian dressing. Broil or grill for about 5 minutes on each side, until eggplant is tender and browned. Remove from heat and sprinkle with grated Parmesan cheese.

To season: Use marjoram, oregano, allspice, chili powder, curry powder, garlic, basil or rosemary.

EGGPLANT
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