

Bubbly goodness of Butternut Squash Lasagna perfect for fall



Butternut Squash Lasagna

Photos Susie Iventosch

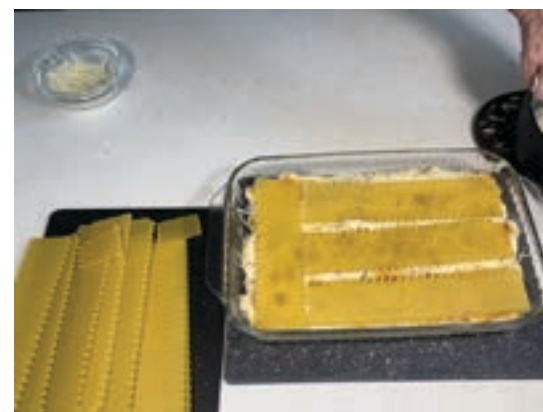
By Susie Iventosch

A friend of mine made this butternut squash lasagna for us about 10 years ago and it was so delicious that I asked her for the recipe. I'd never had a lasagna quite like it before. She emailed it to me right away and there it sat in my "recipes to try" pile for the next 10 years. Part of the reason, is that my husband really doesn't like squash very much, nor does he like lasagna, so I had to sneak it in while he was out of town. Last week, he happened to be out of town while I was pondering what to feature in the food column and this recipe came directly to mind. The timing was perfect, and after so many years of dreaming about this amazing lasagna, I finally made it myself. It is absolutely as flavorful and delicious as I remembered. The flavors are gorgeous and perfect for this time of year.

I've made a few changes to the recipe, one of which is adding onions, and the other is to replace a cup of heavy cream with a blend of ricotta

and plain nonfat Greek yogurt. This change makes the dish a bit healthier. I also love the way it turned out with these changes.

The key ingredient in this recipe is the roasted butternut squash, and to make life easier, use pre-cubed squash, if you can find it at the store. Then, all you have to do is toss it with the onions in a little olive oil, salt and pepper and roast it in the oven. Peeling and removing the seeds from butternut squash isn't too difficult, but this saves a lot of time. Another time-saving feature of the recipe is the use of "oven-ready" lasagna — the kind you don't have to precook before layering them into the lasagna casserole. That is a game changer. Have you ever cooked your lasagna noodles, only to have them fold over, stick to each other, tear, and just become a big mess? No problem with that in this recipe! Also, I froze half of this lasagna and will report back later with how that turned out.



INGREDIENTS

12 (2 1/2-inch x 9 1/2-inch) oven ready lasagna noodles
3 lbs. (about 9 1/2 cups) butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into bite-sized pieces
1 large yellow onion, diced
3 tbsp. olive oil
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
4 cups milk
2 tbsp. fresh rosemary snipped (or 2 tsp. dried)
4 tbsp. butter
2 cloves garlic, minced
4 tbsp. all-purpose flour
2 cups freshly grated parmesan
1 cup ricotta cheese
1 cup plain nonfat Greek yogurt
Rosemary sprigs for garnish

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 450 F. Prepare both a large baking sheet and a 9x13 casserole dish with cooking spray and set aside.

Spread the cubed butternut squash and chopped onion out on the baking sheet and toss with 3 tablespoons olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Roast for approximately 20 to 25 minutes, or until squash is soft and turning golden-brown. Flip with a spatula half way through the baking time. When roasted, remove from oven and set aside. (You can do this step a day or two ahead of time, and refrigerate in an air-tight container.) Reduce oven temperature to 375 F.

Meanwhile, bring the milk and rosemary to a simmer in a small sauce pan and keep warm. Do not boil.

In a larger saucepan, melt the butter with the garlic. Whisk in the flour and cook the roux, stirring for a few minutes over low heat. (This step lets the flour take on a nutty flavor and also helps to create a smooth texture once you start adding the liquid.)

Slowly whisk the milk mixture into the flour mixture, stirring to eliminate any lumps. Continue to simmer over low heat, whisking occasionally, until thickened. This will take about 7-10 minutes.

Stir in the roasted squash and onions and stir well. Set aside.

To assemble the lasagna, spoon about 1 1/2 cups of the butternut squash sauce in the bottom of the pan. Spread out. Lay three lasagna sheets lengthwise on top of the sauce. Use enough of a fourth piece to fill in the opening on the end. Spread half of the remaining sauce over the noodles and sprinkle with 1/2 cup of grated Parmesan.

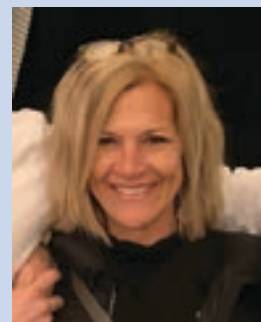
Repeat the process: noodles, sauce, Parmesan. Then finish with a layer of noodles on top.

Spread the ricotta-yogurt mixture evenly over the top of the noodles and cover generously with Parmesan cheese.

Cover tightly with foil, (tent foil if needed so it doesn't touch the top layer) and bake for 30 minutes. Remove foil and continue to bake for another 10-15 minutes, or until the top layer is bubbly and golden-brown. Remove from oven and allow lasagna to set up for about 10 minutes before cutting and serving.

Garnish each piece with a sprig of rosemary.

Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>



Town Hall Theatre reintroduces itself with Oct. 15 Open House



Daniel J. Eslick (Curator of Artistic Programming)



Dennis Markam (Managing Director)

Photos provided

Submitted by Elizabeth Curtis

Contra Costa's oldest continually-operating theatre company has used the difficulties of the last two-and-a-half years as an opportunity to create a new and unique kind of community-based theatre company. In an open house at 6 p.m. on Oct. 15, Town Hall Theatre wants to re-introduce itself to the community and share where it sees the historic theatre going forward.

Since reducing its programming and moving it online in early 2020, Town Hall Theatre has taken steps to completely replace and reconstruct its artistic programming and all-ages theatre education classes in order to create a better, more impactful company. The most impactful change Town Hall has made has been to its artistic programming with the adoption of a "curation model."

In 2020 the company made the difficult choice to eliminate the position of

artistic director. "At the time it was entirely a financial decision," says Managing Director Dennis Markam. "But as we looked forward we saw a chance to address an issue we were facing pre-COVID: how do you organically foster more diversity and inclusiveness not only on our stage, but in positions for leadership and direction?" The solution was to create a new position of Curator of Artistic Programming, who will focus on outreach and encouraging artists around the Bay Area to submit works that had significance or connection to them. The CAP would then work with a committee of staff, board, and community members to develop a Main Stage season that reflects the interests and experience of the Bay Area artistic community.

"As both a producer and artist in the area I have seen so many directors that have been overlooked with fresh takes on canonical material, and playwrights with beautifully fresh stories that should be out there for people to see," says Daniel J. Eslick, Town Hall's new Curator of Artistic Programming. "Yet, because of systemic problems those incredible artists are overlooked. Another big programming change is

the New Voices Series. This is Town Hall's new works program that consists of a series of small-scale productions and readings that feature local playwrights whose work is still in the workshopping phase. This offers playwrights a chance to hear their work aloud and see it 'on its feet.'

"I feel so lucky to be able to help champion these new pieces as the Curator of Artistic Programming and someone who loves the medium of theatre," says Eslick. "And I'm so thrilled to be able to lead our community on a journey into uncharted waters. All I can say is, keep an eye on what we're creating."

The Town Hall Open House will give the community a chance to meet some of the staff and board of Town Hall, ask questions, hear about the upcoming season and plans for the space (which the theatre company now owns), and offer feedback and guidance for what they would like to see on the Town Hall Stage. The Oct. 15 Open House is free and will be followed by the final pay-what-you-like performance of "The Body Play," which is part of the New Voices Series and kicks off Town Hall's 2022-23 Season.

Gold Coast Chamber Players presents 'Folk Inspired,' Nov. 5



Telegraph Quartet

Photo Lisa Marie Mazzucco

Submitted by Pamela Freund-Striplen

The Gold Coast Chamber Players continue their 23rd Season with "Folk Inspired" at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 5 in the Don Tatzin Community Hall at the

Lafayette Library. All concerts will be recorded and ticket holders have access to this Digital Concert Hall, making it possible to enjoy recordings of these live performances anytime throughout the season.

"Folk Inspired" features the Telegraph Quartet with Gold Coast Chamber Players violist Pamela Freund-Striplen. Described by the San Francisco Chronicle as "... an incredibly valuable addition to the cultural landscape" and "powerfully adept ... with a combination of brilliance and subtlety," the Telegraph Quartet was awarded the prestigious 2016 Walter W. Naumburg Chamber Music Award and the Grand Prize at the 2014 Fischhoff Chamber Music Competition. The Quartet has performed in concert halls, music festivals, and academic institutions across the United States and abroad, including New York City's Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, San Francisco's Herbst Theatre, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music's Chamber Masters Series, and at festivals including the Chautauqua Institute, Interlochen Arts Festival, Kneisel Hall Chamber Music Festival, and the Emilia Romagna Festi-

val. The Quartet is currently on the chamber music faculty at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music as the Quartet-in-Residence.

The program includes two quartets written in the early 1950s by female composers Grażyna Bacewicz and Florence Price, both of whom are finally receiving well-deserved recognition. Price's quartet was originally entitled "Negro Folksongs in Counterpoint;" but after the addition of two broadly American folksongs to the original three, she changed the title to simply "Five Folksongs in Counterpoint." Bacewicz's energetic fourth quartet utilizes Polish folk music and is one of her most popular works.

Johannes Brahms' first String Quintet in F major, Op. 88 was written "in the spring of 1882," and the work is sometimes given the nickname "Spring." The sobriquet applies equally well to the fresh and colorful mood of the music and begins with a warm folk-like theme.

Tickets: \$15-45, online or by phone at (925) 283-3728. Discounted Subscriptions are available. www.gccpmusic.com