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# Cooking with the Club



with Chef Robert Larios



## LASAGNA... FROM SOUTH OF THE BORDER

*Photos by Ana Larios, Norma Larios, Rudy Larios and Oscar Meza Jr.*

Robert's Lasagna a la Mexicana is just as it sounds – Mexican-style lasagna. Instead of using tomato-based Italian sauces, I used salsa and enchilada sauce. And while any great lasagna uses pasta to form layers of goodness, I've managed to use corn tortillas as the layering ingredient. Also, instead of using mozzarella cheese (you are welcome to continue using it or experimenting with any other cheeses), I used a mix of extra sharp cheddar and Monterey jack cheese. Here's the recipe and the step-by-step look on how to make it. Enjoy!

### Lasagna... From South of the Border

Serves 4

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 large aluminum lasagna-style container
- 1 bag 36 corn tortillas
- 1 bunch cilantro
- 2 lbs ground beef
- 1 tablespoon pepper
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- Grated sharp cheddar and Monterey Jack cheese
- 4 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 1 white onion, diced
- 4 green onions, diced
- 1 can black olives, 8 oz.
- 1 can enchilada sauce, 8 oz.
- 1 can salsa, 12 oz.
- 1 can refried beans, 12 oz.
- 1 can crema Mexicana (found in most supermarkets from the Cacique brand)
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 1 tablespoon cumin
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Nonstick spray

**Cooking TIDBIT** *If you cannot find crema Mexicana, you may use sour cream. Also, feel free to use any variety of salsa.*

#### [ A Cook's Dictionary ]



**Salsa:** *The Mexican and Spanish word for "sauce," which can signify cooked or fresh mixtures. Salsa cruda is "uncooked salsa;" salsa verde is "green salsa," which is typically based on tomatillos, green chiles and cilantro. Salsas can range in spiciness from mild to mouth-searing. Fresh salsas are located in market's refrigerated section. At home, the salsa should be tightly covered and refrigerated for up to five days. Unopened cooked salsas can be stored at room temperature for six months; once opened, refrigerate them for up to month month.*

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#### DIRECTIONS:



**1** Dice cilantro, white onion, green onions and olives, if not already diced.



**2** Add olive oil to pan on medium heat. Then add pepper, salt, garlic, white onion, paprika and cumin. Cook ground beef until brown, but leave some pink – beef will achieve its final cooking while in the oven. Heat refried beans in another pan over medium heat with occasional stirring until hot.



**3** Spray nonstick spray on all over aluminum container and pour some of the salsa first – this will help to prevent the bottom from becoming burnt while in the oven. Place several tortillas to form the first layer. Spread refried beans, beef, green onions, olives and top with the grated cheeses along with a sprinkle of cilantro. Drizzle some of the enchilada sauce over that layer. Begin the process of placing the tortillas once again and then the salsa over that. Repeat steps until you've reached the top. Once you've reached the top of the container (or you've run out of ingredients), add the rest of the enchilada sauce to cover the entire surface, then cover that with more cheese. Sprinkle with cilantro and olives. To finish, spray the top with the nonstick spray to help prevent burning.



**4** Cover with aluminum foil and bake in the oven for 30 minutes at 350 F or until the cheese begins to bubble. Let stand for 15 minutes before cutting a slice of the lasagna. Drizzle the crema Mexicana over the portion and serve.



**5** Enjoy!



### Food Quote

"When we lose, I eat.  
When we win, I eat. I also eat when we're rained out."

– **Tommy Lasorda,**  
former Dodgers manager