

# Stinging Nettle Lasagna as herbal medicine?



Early spring is nettle season! This is the time of year when we put stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica* for all you botany fans) in as many dishes as we can in order to bring the health benefits of this amazing plant into our daily lives.

In this branch we're going to share our recipe for nettle lasagna with you. It's definitely one of our favorite nettle recipes.

Why are we sharing a food recipe with you, when we're all about herbal **medicine**?

Well, the more we've learned about herbs, the more we've come to think of food as medicine. Rather than waiting for symptoms to occur and treating them with concentrated forms of plants in little pills, we nourish ourselves through the seasons, gathering and using the herbs and wild plants in our every day cooking.

In this way we nourish all of our bodies systems, and reduce the incidents of sickness in our lives.

**Nettle is packed with vitamins, minerals, and amino acids** that are readily absorbed by our bodies when eaten as a whole food. They are high in calcium, magnesium, iron, potassium, and B complex vitamins (among others) and they are also a great source of protein.

**Some of the health benefits of eating nettle include:** stabilizing blood sugar; enhancing the operation of the circulatory, immune, endocrine, nervous, and urinary systems; reducing fatigue and exhaustion; reducing allergic and menopausal problems; and eliminating chronic headaches.

*Okay, here's the recipe...*

## **Nettle Lasagna**

To make it you will need:

- A jar of your favorite spaghetti sauce

*Or if you'd like to make your own sauce (my personal preference):*



- 1 lb. 12 oz. can of tomato sauce
- 15 oz. can of diced tomatoes
- 6 oz. tomato paste
- 3 T dried Oregano and Basil (or twice as much fresh from your garden)
- 8 cloves of Garlic (chopped small)

*And...(for everyone)*

- 16 oz mozzarella cheese (grated)
- 15 oz ricotta cheese
- 1 package of 12 lasagna noodles
- 12 cups of fresh nettle (nettle harvesting tips below)
- 1 onion
- 2 T olive oil

1. Preheat your oven to 375 degrees.

2. If you're making your own sauce, first combine all of the ingredients in a medium saucepan and allow them to simmer while you're preparing the rest of the ingredients.



3. Put a large pan of water on to boil for cooking the noodles. When the water boils add the noodles and cook according to the package directions. Drain and set aside.



4. While you're waiting for the water to boil and the noodles to cook:

5. Combine the two cheeses in a medium bowl, stirring until well mixed, and set aside.



6. Dice an onion and sauté it in olive oil in a large skillet or dutch oven until just translucent. Stir occasionally (you can cut up your nettles while it cooks if you like).

7. Wearing your gloves, place your fresh nettles on a large cutting board. You can use the top 6-8 leaves and stems. (Lower leaves can also be used, but remove the stems from further down, as they tend to be tough even when cooked.)



[\\*\\*\\*Click here to see how to harvest nettles.\\*\\*\\*](#)

(Remember to harvest **BEFORE** it flowers!)

8. Chop the nettles coarsely. Add them to the skillet with your onion and sauté until the nettles are wilted.



**Now all the parts are ready. It's time to assemble the lasagna:**

9. Cover the bottom of a 9 X 13 baking dish with 1/4 of your sauce.



10. Next, put a layer of 4 noodles, then another layer of sauce, a layer of 1/2 of the nettle and onion mixture, and a layer of cheese.



11. Repeat this last step.

12. Put a layer of noodles on top and then finish with your last 1/4 of sauce.

13. Cover the nettle lasagna with foil and bake in 375 degree oven for 45 minutes. You can remove the foil for the last 10 to 15 minutes of cooking time if you like a crunchier top.



14. Remove from oven – let sit about 15 minutes and then enjoy your nettle lasagna!



***You can also put nettles in just about any dish that takes greens like spinach or kale.***

Another of our favorites is nettle spanakopita (or nettle-kopita!). Just substitute nettle for spinach in your favorite spanakopita recipe (the *Moosewood Cookbook* has an excellent one).

Source: [www.learningherbs.com](http://www.learningherbs.com)

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