

FOOD & WINE

INSPIRATION SERVED DAILY

How to Make Vegetable Lasagna for Every Season

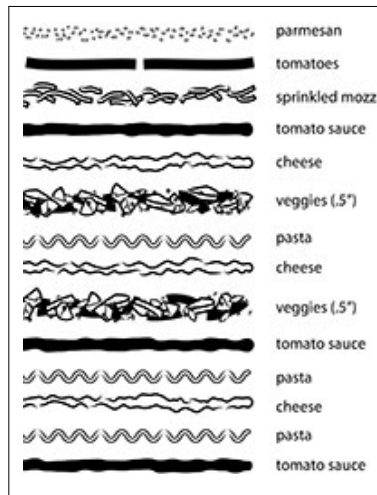
By LIZ NEUMARK

The Hudson Valley farmer and caterer Liz Neumark, of Katchkie Farms and Great Performances, also runs The Sylvia Center, a nonprofit in upstate New York that educates kids about real food. Her new cookbook, Sylvia's Table, features easy-to-follow recipes from food world friends like F&W's Dana Cowin, who shared her daughter's recipe for chicken soup. Here, Neumark teases one of her most flexible recipes: Vegetable Lasagna.

Without a doubt one of my signature recipes in Sylvia's Table is Vegetable Lasagna, simply because not only do I cook it, but I grow it as well. From early July through early October, I use only Katchkie Farm produce in the dish. The eggs are from our chickens and the cheese is from Hawthorne Valley Farm (I will often use their quark in lieu of ricotta) or other Hudson Valley dairies.

In general, recipes are used two different ways—as guidelines for seasoned cooks who get inspired by a dish, and verbatim by those who believe they lack the ability or confidence to improvise even slightly. For the latter group, I scripted the lasagna-making process as precisely as possible.

For the improv set, lasagna is the perfect foil for whatever is in season. In July, chard or kale or spinach is a delightful addition as a green layer. Spinach and arugula are acceptable as well.



Lasagna
Photo courtesy of Randomhouse

Onions, leeks or scallions are interchangeable as the allium—with spring onions or scallions first on the scene. The garlic is from storage and was harvested midsummer. When it's done, it's gone and we wait until next year.

Zucchini are rapidly in abundance but peppers and eggplant can take their time. I look to southern New Jersey farmers to tide me over in case the Katchkie produce isn't ready. However, we get tomatoes way before anyone else because we grow them in our

greenhouses. By mid-June, our first tomatoes are ready and the long drought has ended—thankfully!

When I started making lasagna about 15 years ago, I had trouble remembering the sequence of multiple layers. So I stacked the recipe's layered ingredients in a word map from the bottom up. I use the illustration to this very day.

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