

## Signature Dish: Steven Bourland's Vegan Lasagna

**Who:** Steven Bourland of Tampa, 21, a biology major at the University of South Florida and a veterinary assistant.

**What:** Vegan lasagna.

**Why vegan?** It all started with three pigs: Oscar, Hugo and Bruce.

Bourland raised the pigs through a high school FFA program. At the end of the project, he and the other students showed their pigs at the state fair – and then said goodbye. Everybody cried.

"You get so attached to (the pigs)," Bourland says. "They're just like big dogs."

He says he felt glad that he gave the pigs a good home for as long as possible. "But still, knowing that they had to sacrifice their (lives) just so I could enjoy, you know, enjoy eating them ... was something I wasn't comfortable with."

Bourland started thinking about veganism again in college, after he learned how factory farms treat their animals. It wasn't an easy decision.

"I do, in fact, love eating meat," Bourland says.

So does his family, whom he describes as "very big meat eaters." They supported his decision, but told him he had to cook his own vegan meals.

Luckily, Bourland likes cooking. "I love the different possibilities with cooking. I love that you can try new things and find new flavors and tastes that you hadn't discovered before."

**About the recipe:** Six months after he became a vegan, Bourland found a vegan lasagna recipe on vegweb.com. His family had always shared lasagna together; this was a vegan alternative.

He tried the vegan lasagna himself before offering it to his parents.

"I've always been too paranoid to experiment with my family first, because I want to represent the (vegan) lifestyle well," he says.

When Bourland made the lasagna for his family, "they all raved over how amazing it was."

Since then, he has made it for friends and co-workers as well. They all love it.

His mouth still waters whenever his parents cook meat. But he says knowing that he's making "a choice to better the lives of these animals makes it worth it."

**On the side:** A salad.

**CAN'T COOK WITHOUT?** "I use garlic like crazy," Bourland says. "I love garlic. It makes me so happy."

**Plans for the future:** Bourland has wanted to be a vet ever since he was a kid. He plans to attend veterinary school, and work with small animals or as an emergency vet.

**>>moderate**

### **Vegan Lasagna**

#### **1 tablespoon olive oil**

1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped

6 cloves garlic, minced

8 ounces carrots, sliced and steamed

1/4 cup canned low-sodium vegetable broth

16 ounces herbed tofu, or regular firm tofu

8 ounces vegan cream cheese

2 tablespoons lemon juice

1/8 teaspoon nutmeg

1/2 cup nutritional yeast

12 lasagna noodles, uncooked

2 to 3 (14-ounce) jars spaghetti sauce

1 (16-ounce) bag spinach leaves

Shredded vegan cheese, optional

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Add olive oil to a large skillet, place over medium-high heat. Add parsley and garlic, saute for 1 minute. Add carrots and broth; simmer uncovered for 5 minutes.

Add herbed tofu, cream cheese and lemon juice; stir well and mash tofu. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until the cream cheese melts. Stir in nutmeg. Add nutritional yeast if you'd like it a little bit more cheesy. Remove from heat.

Place three lasagna noodles in an 11- by 7-inch baking dish. Spread tofu mixture over top, place 3 noodles on top of that, and spread spaghetti sauce and spinach on top of those. Repeat process until all noodles are used up. Top with spaghetti sauce. Add shredded vegan cheese if desired and sprinkle with nutritional yeast.

Bake for about 45 minutes to 1 hour, until noodles are cooked.

Serves 8.

Source: [vegweb.com](http://vegweb.com), Steven Bourland