

BAKED ZITI

This is perfect for cold winter days. It's easy to assemble ahead of time and bring to a friend or enjoy with loved ones. Best of all, it's great to have leftovers in the freezer. You can make it with or without meat. ~ Kat

Ingredients

1 lb. ziti pasta
1 lb. ground beef or Italian sausage
(or a mix of both)
1 medium onion, finely chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 jar (24 oz.) marinara sauce (or
homemade tomato sauce)
1 can (15 oz.) tomato sauce
1 can (15 oz.) diced tomatoes,
drained

1 teaspoon Italian
seasoning
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon black
pepper
1 cup ricotta cheese
1 large egg
2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
Fresh basil or parsley, chopped (for garnish)

Serves: 6-8

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 45 minutes



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Directions

Preheat Oven: Preheat your oven to 375° F.

Cook Pasta: Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the ziti pasta and cook until just al dente, according to package instructions. Drain and set aside.

Prepare Meat Sauce:

In a large skillet over medium heat, add a drizzle of olive oil and cook the ground beef or sausage until browned.

Add the chopped onion and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Add minced garlic and cook for another minute.

Stir in the marinara sauce, tomato sauce, and diced tomatoes. Add Italian seasoning, salt, and pepper. Let it simmer on low for 10-15 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Prepare Ricotta Mixture:

In a medium bowl, mix together the ricotta cheese and egg until smooth. Set aside.



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Assemble the Bake:

In a large baking dish (about 9x13 inches), spread a thin layer of meat sauce on the bottom.

Layer half of the cooked ziti over the sauce, then spread half of the ricotta mixture on top.

Sprinkle with 1 cup of mozzarella cheese, then add another layer of meat sauce.

Repeat with the remaining ziti, ricotta mixture, and meat sauce. Top with the remaining mozzarella and sprinkle Parmesan cheese over the top.

Bake: Cover the baking dish with foil and bake for 20 minutes. Remove the foil and bake for another 10-15 minutes, or until the cheese is bubbly and golden brown.

Serve:

Garnish with fresh basil or parsley, and let it cool slightly before serving. Enjoy!

