

JoEllen's Baked Ziti

This is a great make ahead dish! It can also be frozen for a few months.

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Recipe type: Dinner

Cuisine: Italian

Ingredients

- 1 pound whole milk cottage cheese; room temperature
- 2 eggs, room temperature
- 1 cup freshly grated parmesan cheese
- salt and pepper
- 1 pound of ziti pasta, or other pasta in similar shape
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 5 garlic cloves, minced
- 1- 28oz can tomato sauce
- 1- 14.5 oz can diced tomatoes (I like to use the fire roasted tomatoes if possible)
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ cup fresh basil; plus extra for topping
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 8 ounces whole milk mozzarella, cut into ¼-1/2 inch cubes



Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees
2. This can be baked in 1 9X13 inch pan or two 8x8 inch pans; prepare the pans by spraying them with cooking spray
3. Whisk cottage cheese, eggs, and ½ cup of parmesan together in a bowl
4. In a medium size skillet, add in the 2 tablespoons of oil; once heated add in the garlic to cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds, being careful it doesn't brown
5. Stir in the tomato sauce, diced tomatoes, and oregano; cook for about 10 minutes
6. Remove the skillet from the heat, and add in ½ cup basil and the sugar; gently stir to mix
7. Cook the pasta until al dente; you don't want the pasta to be cooked all the way through since it will cook more in the oven
8. Drain the pasta
9. While the pasta drains, in the same pot, add in the heavy cream over medium/low heat, until it is warm
10. Turn the heat off and add in the pasta, cottage cheese mixture, about half of the tomato sauce, and half of the mozzarella
11. Stir until everything is evenly combined
12. Pour the mixture into the prepared baking pans
13. Pour the remaining sauce over the top
14. Top it off with the rest of the mozzarella and the other ½ cup of parmesan cheese
15. If you are making this ahead of time, this is when you would refrigerate it
16. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes
17. Remove the foil, and bake for another 30 minutes, or until bubbly and starting the brown
18. Allow it to cool for 10-15 minutes before serving
19. Sprinkle with fresh basil or parsley to serve

Recipe by From Scratch With Maria Provenzano at <http://fromscratchwithmaria.com/joellens-baked-ziti/>