

Baked pasta al forno

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Baked pasta al forno is a classic and hearty baked Italian pasta dish. It is made by layering penne pasta with a hearty Bolognese meat sauce, creamy bechamel sauce and a mixture of cheese then baked to perfection. It's Italian baked comfort food. Pasta baked al forno is the quicker version of lasagna. Basically the same ingredients in a different variation.

Why You will love this baked pasta al forno recipe

This pasta bake is easy to prepare if you have a prep plan in place. For instance the sauces can be made ahead of time even the day before. Then assembled and baked the day you are going to serve.

Or you can assemble the pasta al forno one day refrigerate it and bake it next. Or you can freeze it assembled baked or unbaked for a ready made quick meal. These lasagna casserole pans are freezer to oven to table friendly.

You will love this pasta bake al forno recipe when you want to feed a crowd. The combination of pasta mixed with meat sauce and melted cheese is universally appealing. making it a crowd pleaser at gatherings.

Ingredients

- 1 lb. al dente cooked penne pasta
- 4 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 Tbsp. minced garlic

- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 Lb. lean ground beef
- 1 cup red wine
- 4 cups tomato sauce
- 2 cups water
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes
- a few basil leaves
- 1 stick of butter
- 1/3 cup flour
- 3 cups milk
- pinch of nutmeg
- 4 cups shredded mozzarella
- 2 cups grated parmesan cheese

Instructions

1. Start by making the meat sauce in a stock pot saute the onion and garlic until soft and fragrant. Add the ground beef and cook until brown. salt and pepper to tastes
2. Deglaze the pan with the red wine waiting until it evaporates before adding the tomato sauce, cherry tomatoes and water. Add the basil leaves. Simmer covered for 2 hours.
3. For the bechamel sauce melt the butter in a medium size saucepan over medium heat add the flour stirring continuously cook for one minute. Then slowly add the milk stirring continuously add the nutmeg salt and pepper to taste. Cook until sauce thickens, about 15 minutes.
4. Toss the el dente cooked penne pasta in the bechamel sauce then add 1/2 of the meat sauce. Add in 1/2 of the mozzarella and 1/2 the amount of grated parmesan.
5. Line a oven poof 9 X 12 lasagna pan first with some of the meat sauce add the pasta mixture. Top with the remaining meat sauce, mozzarella and grated parmesan.
6. Bake covered in a preheated 375-degree oven for 45 minutes. remove the cover and bake 15 minutes longer, or

until the cheese is melted and beginning to brown. Let cool slightly before serving. ENJOY!!!