

Baked Pasta Florentine

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Nothing is better than this Gemille shaped baked pasta casserole, smothered in creamy, cheesy bechamel sauce.

It really is one of those pasta recipes that you'll want to make often. Not only is it easy and delicious it's a pasta dish perfect for busy weeknight dinners or makes a great make ahead meal when you want to feed a crowd.

I love casserole pasta bakes, there easy if you want a hands free dinner and they're freezer friendly for ready made meals.

Growing up in the hills of Tuscany any baked pasta was my favorite. My Mom's pasta bakes were simple and delicious. This dish brings back memories, from when I was a kid hanging around the kitchen counter, tasting whatever Mom was cooking.

No offense Mom, but I've gourmet it up a bit. I love my creamy, cheese filled, bechamel smothered casserole, a little more than Mom's. Sometimes you have to put a new twist on an old classic, to fit your lifestyle and taste. I kick up a notch by using Bechamel sauce instead of Mom's classic marinara sauce.

How to make the Sauce for baked pasta Florentine

The cheesy sauce for this baked pasta florentine is basically a glorified Bechamel sauce, traditionally bechamel sauce is a mixture of milk, flour and butter.

This recipe started like that with butter, flour and milk

than I added the cheeses. Bechamel sauce is not difficult to make, but you do need to pay attention, for success don't leave the stove unattended, the sauce burns quickly. Stir continuously while sauce is simmering. If the sauce is too thick add more milk, if too thin coat one pad of butter with flour and drop it in sauce while simmering. Add the cheeses after the sauce thickens a bit.

There never seems to be any left overs, but if there are you can freeze it for a ready made meal perfect for a hurry-up dinner for unexpected guest.

All you need is a casserole dish, 45 minutes, a prep plan and you can feed as many people as you need to, I like to use this it's big enough for 6 portion,

and the white color looks pretty on almost any table and goes from oven to table to freeze, to dish washer.

13 x 9 covered white casserole dish Just be sure to use a casserole dish that goes from oven to table, to limit the pots and pans in the sink.

The extra bonus with casserole meals, your guest can serve themselves, set out these pretty dinner napkins to set a festive mood and serve this pasta bake with a simple salad and crusty bread for a special dinner everyone will love.

If you make this baked pasta Florentine, please be sure to leave me a comment, and don't forget to tag me on Instagram, Above all I love hearing from you guys, and do my best to respond.

Ingredients

- 1/2 lbs Gemille shaped pasta
- 3 cups chopped spinach
- 1 cup chopped sun dried tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons each butter and olive oil

- 1/2 chopped onion
- 1 tablespoon chopped garlic
- 1/4 cup flour
- 2 cups milk
- 1 cup grated parmesan
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella
- 1 cup shredded sharp cheddar
- 2 slices chopped prosciutto
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 2 tablespoons chopped Italian parsley
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

- Heat oven to 375
- Cook pasta el dente
- Heat the olive oil in a deep saute pan
- Add onion and garlic saute until tender and just beginning to brown
- Add 2 tablespoons of butter to the pan sprinkle the flour over the onions and garlic
- Slowly whisk in milk, chicken stock, salt, pepper and nutmeg
- Add in all the cheeses saving 1/4 cup of each for topping
- Add sun dried tomatoes and Simmer on low heat 10 minutes stir to prevent browning
- Add chopped spinach pour into a 9 x 13 casserole dish Top with the reserved cheeses and chopped prosciutto
- Bake in a 375 degree oven until golden and bubbly about 30 minutes.....ENJOY