

Authentic Italian Stuffed Tomatoes with Rice and Potatoes (Roman Recipe)

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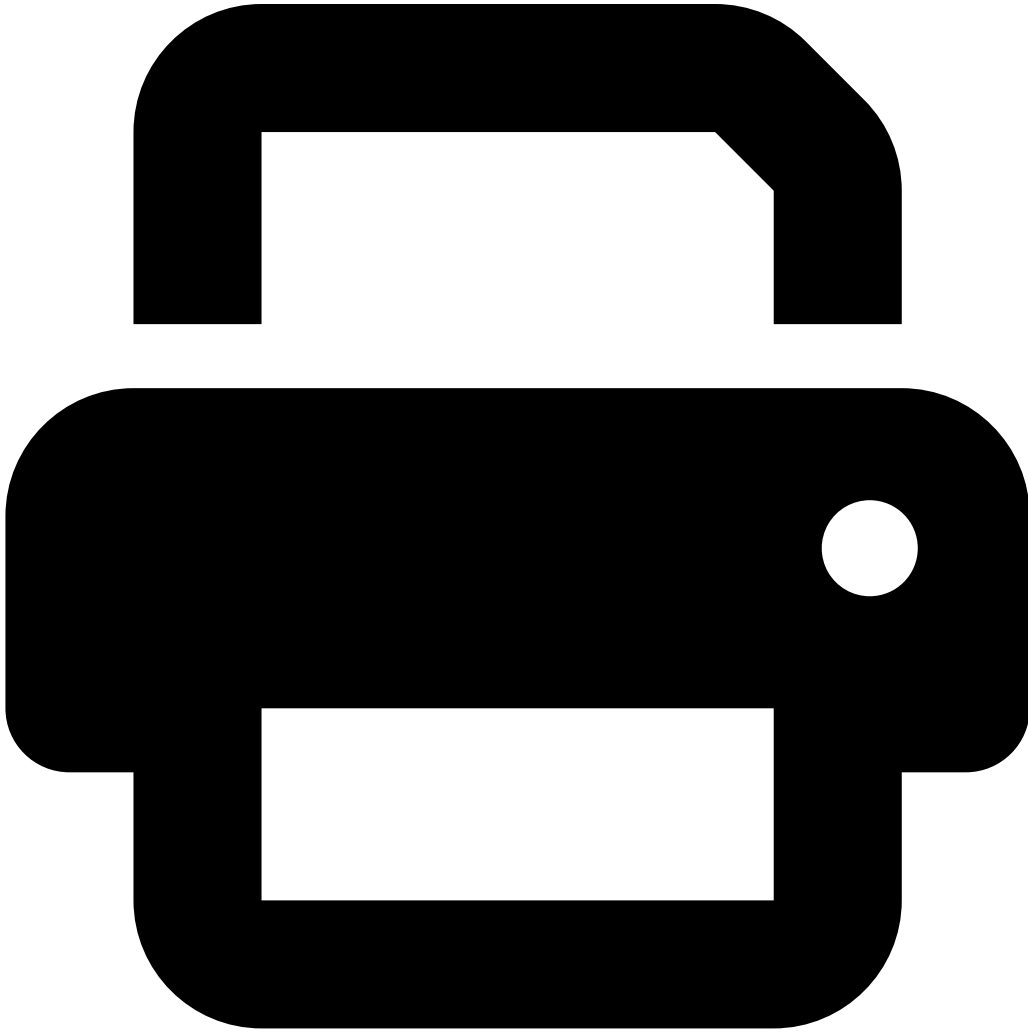
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This dish goes back to **Roman home cooking**, where simplicity wasn't a trend—it was survival and tradition. *Pomodori Ripieni di Riso* (stuffed tomatoes with rice) became especially popular in and around Rome and Lazio as a way to stretch seasonal summer produce into a full, satisfying meal.

Farmers and home cooks would hollow out ripe tomatoes at peak season, using every bit of the fruit—juice, pulp, and all—to season uncooked rice. As it baked slowly in the oven, the rice absorbed the tomato's natural sweetness while olive oil, garlic, and basil built layers of flavor. Nothing was wasted, and nothing was complicated.

The addition of potatoes baked underneath is a classic Roman touch. They act almost like a built-in side dish, soaking up the tomato juices as everything roasts together into one unified pan.

What you get is a dish that feels humble but deeply intentional—rooted in old-world Italian cooking where seasonal ingredients and patience did all the work.

Things to know about this Authentic Italian Stuffed Tomatoes with Rice and Potatoes (Roman Recipe)

What to Look For

- Rice fully cooked and fluffy inside
- Tomatoes slightly wrinkled and jammy
- Potatoes deeply golden and infused with tomato juices

• How to Serve

- Best at **room temperature** (this is very Italian)
- Drizzle with a little fresh olive oil before serving
- Spoon those potatoes right alongside—don't leave them behind

• Pro Tips

- Don't skip the resting time for the rice
- Use ripe but sturdy tomatoes so they hold their shape
- If the pan looks dry halfway through, add a splash of water or more olive oil
- Let them sit 10–15 minutes before serving so everything settles

• Storage

- **Fridge: up to 3 days**
- **Reheat gently or enjoy cold/room temp**
- **Flavor actually gets better the next day**
- **If you loved these authentic Roman stuffed tomatoes, you'll want to explore more simple Italian dishes that let seasonal ingredients shine.**
 - **My Authentic Tomato Bolognese Sauce** for another classic, slow-simmered staple
 - **Italian Roasted Potatoes** for the perfect crispy side dish
 - **Caponata (Sicilian Eggplant Relish)** if you love bold Mediterranean flavors
 - **Lemon Loaf** cake for something bright and sweet to finish

If you make this recipe, leave a comment and let me know how it turned out—or tag me so I can see your version straight from the oven ☐

Authentic Italian Stuffed Tomatoes with Rice and Potatoes (Roman Recipe)



Authentic Italian stuffed tomatoes filled with rice, garlic, and basil, roasted with potatoes until tender and flavorful—just like in Rome.

- 6 medium tomatoes (firm)
- 1 cup uncooked short grain rice (Arborio)
- 2 cloves garlic (minced)
- 1/3 cup basil (torn)
- 3 Tbsp olive oil
- 2-3 medium potatoes (cut into medium dice)
- salt and pepper to taste

1. **Prep the Tomatoes**

Cut the tops off and set aside. Scoop out the pulp and juices into a bowl. Salt the inside of each tomato and place them upside down for about 20 minutes to drain.

2. **Make the Rice Filling**

Crush or blend the tomato pulp until slightly smooth. Add:

Mix and let it sit for **at least 15 minutes**. □ This step is key—the rice absorbs all that tomato flavor before baking

3. **Prep the Potatoes**

Slice the potatoes thin or into medium dice Toss with:

Spread them in the bottom of your baking dish.

4. **Stuff & Assemble**

Fill the tomatoes with the rice mixture (don't pack tightly). Place them directly on top of the potatoes .Add

the tomato tops back on and drizzle everything with a little more olive oil.

5. Roast

Bake at **375°F (190°C)** for **50–60 minutes**, until:

the rice is tender the tomatoes are soft and slightly caramelized the potatoes are golden and crispy on the edges

Main Course

Italian

authentic Italian stuffed tomatoes with rice and potatoes”

15 Weeknight Italian Meals: Easy Recipes in Under 45 Minutes

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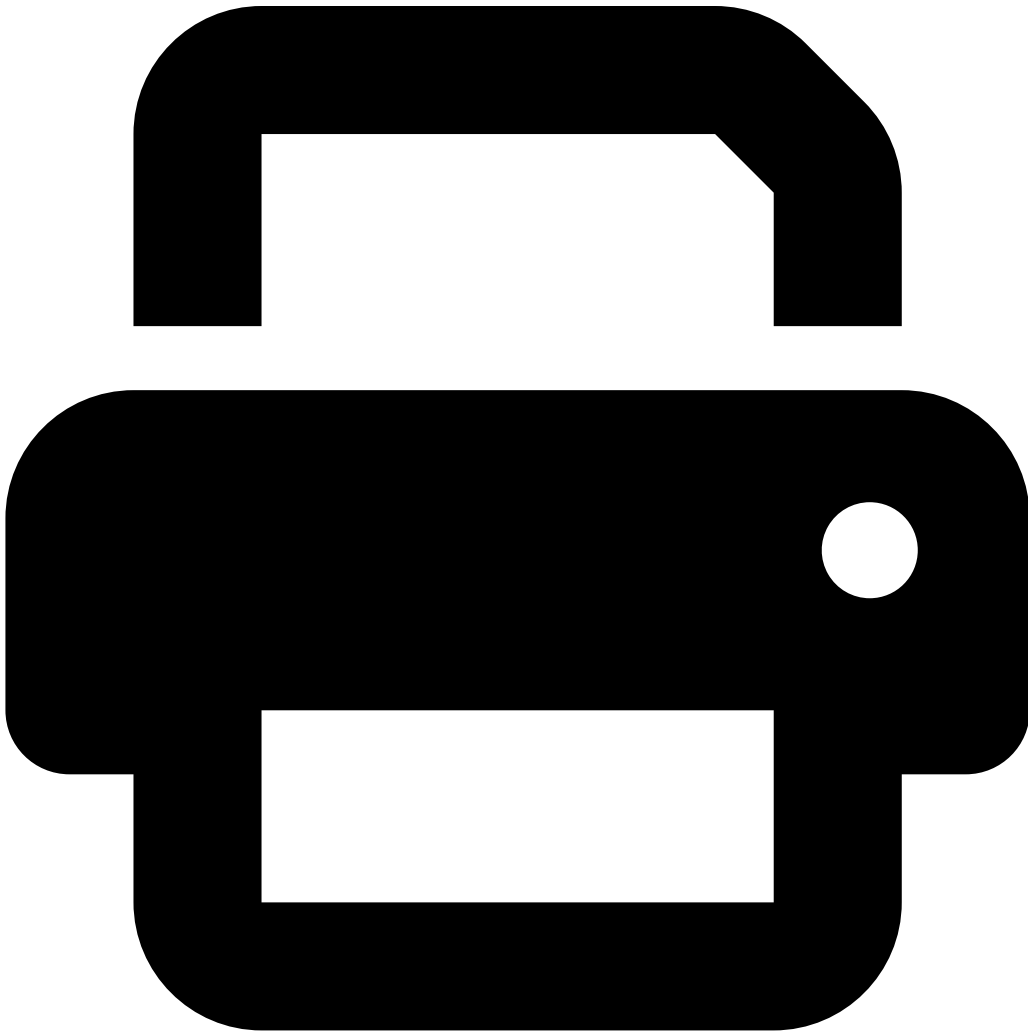
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Weeknight cooking doesn't need to be complicated to be good. Some of the best Italian meals are built on simple ingredients, cooked well, and brought to the table without overthinking it.

This is the kind of food you make when you want something real—pasta that comes together in one pan, sauces that don't take all day, and meals that feel comforting without being heavy. It's not about perfection, it's about flavor, timing, and knowing a few go-to recipes you can rely on.

Inside this 15 weeknight Italian meals guide, you'll find a collection of easy weeknight Italian meals—from quick pastas and skillet dinners to cozy baked dishes and fresh, seasonal sides. Everything here is designed to work in real life, with recipes you can make in under 45 minutes and come back to again and again.

Lemon Asparagus Ricciarelle Pasta

Light, fresh, and full of spring flavors! This **Lemon Asparagus Pasta** features tender sautéed asparagus, bright lemon sauce, and Parmesan, perfect for an easy weeknight dinner or elegant spring meal.

[GO TO RECIPE](#)

One-Pot Creamy Zucchini Pasta (Pasta e Zucchini)

This one-pot creamy zucchini pasta is a traditional Italian recipe where pasta cooks directly with zucchini, onion, and olive oil, creating a naturally creamy sauce with Parmesan and pasta starch.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Spicy pasta Norcina Spicy Italian sausage pasta

Spicy pasta alla norcina is an Italian pasta dish made with sausage in a creamy cheese sauce. There are different variations, some have mushrooms or different cured meats. The recipe is easy to make and takes about as much time to make as it takes the pasta to cook[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Pesto tortellini pasta salad

If you're looking for the perfect summer pasta salad, this pesto tortellini pasta **Salad** is one of my favorites. Full of Mediterranean flavors and hearty enough to be a meal on its

own, it's one of those dishes that always disappears quickly when ever I bring it to potlucks, or Sunday lunches.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Authentic Italian Pasta e Fagioli

Authentic Pasta e fagioli is a humble, hearty and soul-warming Italian pasta dish that brings back vivid childhood memories of the smell of simmering beans, tomatoes, and garlic. for many Italian families, pasta e fagioli was the meal that could feed everyone on a tight budget. It's the ultimate "cucina povera" dish- poor kitchen.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Air Fryer Parmesan chicken Spiedini

Air fryer parmesan chicken spiedini are Italy's version of skewers or kabobs. In this spiedini recipe boneless, skinless chicken thighs are marinated in a blend of Italian spices, cooked in the air fryer, and basted with a delicious garlic, parmesan butter sauce.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Chicken Meatballs with marry me orzo

Tender chicken meatballs are always a hit at the dinner table, and when you pair them with creamy *Marry Me Orzo*, you've got the ultimate comfort meal. This dish brings together juicy baked chicken meatballs and orzo pasta simmered in a rich Parmesan and sun-dried tomato cream sauce. It's the kind of meal that feels special enough for date night yet easy enough for a weeknight family dinner.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Pollo al Limone Italian lemon

chicken

Lemons are in peak season right now, and there's no better way to celebrate their bright, zesty flavor than with this Italian Lemon Chicken. Known as *Pollo al Limone*, this dish is simple, rustic, and full of Southern Italian charm. With a golden sear, a light pan sauce, and a fresh lemon-parsley drizzle, it's the kind of meal that tastes like summer. GO TO RECIPE

Best cod Francese Recipe- in 30 minutes

Best Cod Francese Recipe – in 30 Minutes is a lightly battered, pan-fried cod fillet in an elegant lemon, butter and white wine sauce. It's similar to chicken piccata—but without the capers and with a velvety, lemon-butter sauce that clings to the golden crust. Cod Francese is a classic restaurant-style dish that's surprisingly simple to make at home. The hallmark is the light coating of flour and egg that gives the fish a delicate, crisp texture—perfect for soaking up that tangy, buttery sauce. GO TO RECIPE

Shrimp spaghetti with basil tomato sauce

This Shrimp Spaghetti with Tomato Basil Sauce is a simple, fresh pasta dish made with sautéed shrimp, juicy summer tomatoes, garlic, and plenty of fragrant basil. The sauce is created right in the pan by combining the tomato juices with starchy pasta water and a generous handful of grated parmesan, giving you a light flavorful coating that clings to the pasta. GO TO RECIPE

<https://lorianasheacooks.com/shrimp-tomato-basil-spaghetti/>

Authentic Italian shrimp oreganata

Crispy, garlicky, and straight out of an Italian kitchen.

This shrimp oreganata is all about simple ingredients—olive oil, lemon, breadcrumbs, and a heavy hand with oregano—baked until golden and perfect for scooping with bread.

It's fast, it's bold, and it tastes like something you'd order at your favorite spot... but better at home.

[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Crispy pan fried chicken cutlets

These crispy breaded chicken cutlet recipe are pan fried and they were a staple in my childhood growing up and in many Italian kitchens. They are juicy, crispy delicious and so easy to make. Serve the cutlets along side a salad for a light lunch or dinner.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

The Best Italian-Style Fried Calamari

Golden, crispy, and impossible to stop eating.

This Italian-style fried calamari is light, crunchy, and finished with lemon and a pinch of salt—just the way it should be. No heavy batter, no fuss—just fresh squid, a quick fry, and that perfect crisp.

Serve it hot with marinara or straight up with lemon... either way, it's gone in minutes.

GO TO RECIPE

Braised Fennel Oreganata with Pancetta

Braised fennel oreganata with pancetta is one of those simple Italian side dishes that feels both rustic and elegant – the kind of recipe that tastes like it came out of a cozy countryside kitchen. Fennel is one of my favorite seasonal ingredients to cook with this time of year. When it's in season, it's sweet, aromatic, and incredibly versatile, and I love finding ways to let its natural flavor shine.

GO TO RECIPE

One pan orzo with summer vegetables

Some meals just feel easy—especially when they come together in one pan. This one-pan orzo with summer vegetables is one of those simple, feel-good recipes that checks all the boxes: quick to make, minimal cleanup, and full of fresh summer flavor.
GO TO RECIPE

At the end of the day, weeknight cooking should feel manageable—not like a project. These are the kinds of Italian meals you can lean on when you want something good without spending hours in the kitchen. Simple ingredients, a few solid techniques, and recipes that actually work on a busy night.

Whether it's a quick pasta, a one-pan skillet, or something baked and cozy, this is the kind of cooking that becomes part of your routine—the meals you make without thinking twice, and the ones everyone looks forward to.

Save this guide so you always have a go-to list of easy weeknight Italian meals.

Pick a recipe to try this week, and come back when you need something new. For more simple, flavorful Italian recipes, explore the blog and find your next favorite.

Lemon Asparagus Ricciarelle Pasta

Lemon Asparagus Ricciarelle Pasta

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Spring is all about fresh, vibrant flavors, and nothing says “springtime on a plate” quite like this **Lemon Asparagus Ricciarelle Pasta**. The curly, ribbon-like ricciarelle pasta holds onto every bit of the zesty lemon sauce, while the sautéed asparagus adds tender-crisp bites.

To elevate the dish, we puree **half of the asparagus** to create a silky sauce that clings to the pasta, giving each bite a luxurious texture without adding cream. It’s simple, bright, and elegant—perfect for a weeknight dinner or a light spring gathering.

Whether cooking for your family, hosting friends, or craving something fresh for yourself, this pasta is a seasonal star. Pair it with a crisp white wine or a simple green salad, and you’ve got a meal that feels indulgent yet effortless.

Things to know about this Lemon Asparagus Ricciarelle Pasta

- **Pureeing half the asparagus:** This creates a silky, smooth sauce that coats the pasta while still giving you tender asparagus bites.
- **Cream optional:** Pureeing the asparagus gives a creamy texture naturally; cream is only needed if you want it extra rich.
- **Leftovers:** Store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 2 days. Reheat gently with a splash of olive oil or water.
- **Pasta variations:** While ricciarelle is ideal for holding the sauce, you can experiment with other short, ridged, or twisted pasta like cavatelli, fusilli, or campanelle. Each shape will change how the sauce clings and the overall bite of the dish.
- **Flavor variations:** Add a pinch of red pepper flakes for heat, or mix in toasted pine nuts for crunch.

Love this recipe? Explore more **spring-inspired pasta dishes** on the blog! Try my Asparagus, pancetta and lemon lasagna for another light and vibrant spring time meal, or check out my one pot creamy zucchini pasta for a delicious quick meal that uses few ingredients.

Sign up for my newsletter to get seasonal recipes, kitchen tips, and cooking inspiration delivered straight to your inbox!

Lemon Asparagus Ricciarelle Pasta



Light, fresh, and full of spring flavors! This **Lemon Asparagus Ricciarelle Pasta** features tender sautéed asparagus, bright lemon sauce, and Parmesan, perfect for an easy weeknight dinner or elegant spring meal.

- 12 Oz. Ricciarelle pasta (Use any shape pasta)
 - 1 Lb. Asparagus (trimmed and cut into 2-inch pieces)
 - 4 Tbsp. olive oil
 - 2 gloves garlic (minced)
 - 1 Tbsp. lemon rind
 - 1/3 cup lemon juice (from 1 lemon)
 - 1/2 cup **Parmesan cheese** (grated)
 - 1 cup pasta water (reserve before draining, always same more than recipe calls for)
 - 1/3 cup Italian parsley (chopped)
 - salt and pepper (to taste)
1. **Cook the pasta:** Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the ricciarelle pasta according to package instructions. Drain, reserving 2 cups of pasta water.
 2. **Sauté the asparagus:** Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add asparagus and sauté for 4–5 minutes until tender-crisp. Add garlic during the last minute.
 3. **Puree half the asparagus:** Transfer half of the sautéed asparagus to a blender or food processor and puree until smooth. Return the puree to the skillet with the remaining whole asparagus.

4. **Make the sauce:** Lower the heat, then add lemon zest, lemon juice, and Parmesan to the skillet. Stir in the cooked pasta. If using cream, add now. Toss everything together, adding reserved pasta water a little at a time until the sauce reaches your desired consistency.
5. **Season and serve:** Taste and season with salt and pepper. Serve immediately, garnished with fresh parsley and extra Parmesan if desired.

Main Course

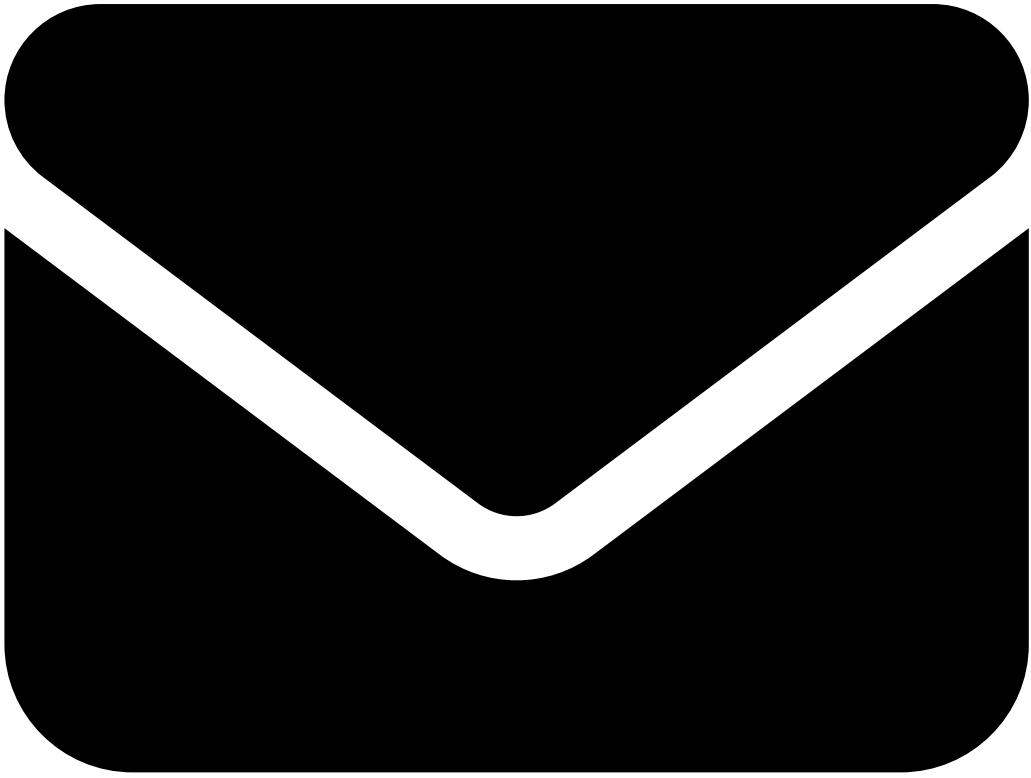
Italian

Asparagus Italian, pasta

Italian Kale and Potatoes

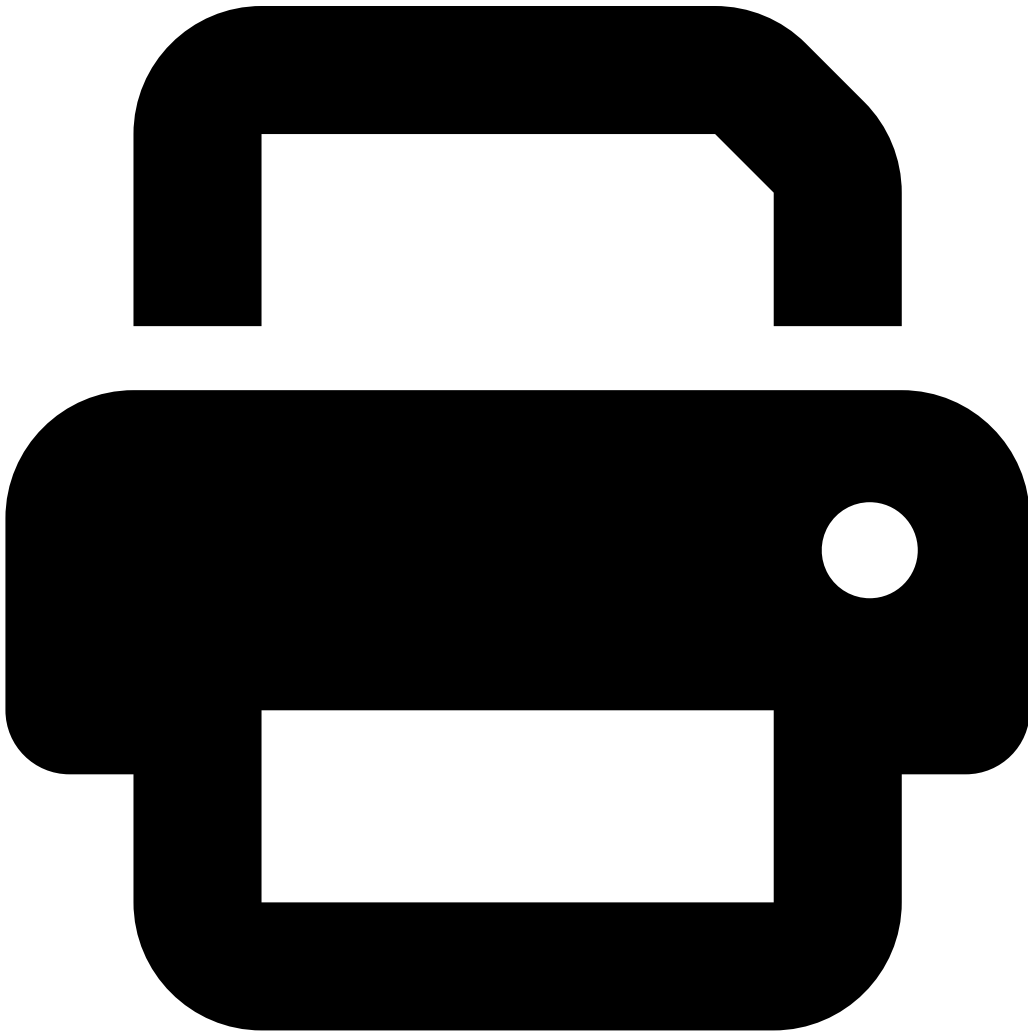
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Tuscan Kale and Potatoes is one of those dishes that reminds us how beautiful simple food can be. In Tuscany, cooking has always been about making the most of what's growing in the garden and what's in the pantry. Hearty greens like Tuscan kale – often called lacinato or dinosaur kale – have been a staple in the region for centuries, especially in rustic, peasant-style cooking known as *cucina povera*.

Potatoes, introduced to Italy in the 16th century, eventually became a beloved part of country cooking because they were filling, affordable, and easy to grow. Pair them with sturdy kale, good olive oil, and garlic, and you have the foundation of countless traditional Tuscan dishes – simple, nourishing, and deeply satisfying.

This version adds blistered cherry tomatoes for a little sweetness and brightness, but the heart of the dish stays true to its roots: humble ingredients treated with care. It's the

kind of food that feels like it belongs on a farmhouse table, served family-style with warm bread and good conversation.

Things to know about this Italian kale and potatoes

- **Don't skip parboiling** – it ensures the potatoes are creamy inside and golden when sautéed.
 - Tuscan kale (also called lacinato or dinosaur kale) holds its texture beautifully in this dish.
 - Want to make it heartier? Add white beans or top with a fried egg.
 - This dish reheats beautifully the next day.
-

Serving Ideas

This pairs beautifully with:

- Grilled chicken
- Italian sausage
- Pan-seared fish
- Or simply warm crusty bread and good olive oil

It's also delicious served at room temperature, making it perfect for gatherings.

Storage

Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Reheat gently in a skillet with a drizzle of olive oil.

Final Thoughts

This is the kind of rustic Italian cooking that proves you don't need complicated ingredients to create something deeply satisfying. Just good olive oil, fresh vegetables, and a little care.

If you make this Tuscan Kale and Potatoes, let me know in the comments – and don't forget to share it with someone who loves simple Italian cooking ☐

Bring Rustic Italian Cooking Home

If you loved this Tuscan Kale and Potatoes, you're going to enjoy some of my other simple, rustic Italian dishes that celebrate humble ingredients and big flavor.

For another cozy vegetable-forward dish, try my **Italian Spaghetti Frittata** – it's a beautiful way to transform simple ingredients into something special.

If you're looking to make this a complete meal, serve it alongside my **Italian Meatloaf with Potatoes** for a hearty Sunday-style dinner.

Or keep things classic with my **cod Francese**

And if you love traditional pasta shapes, don't miss my **Southern Italian Cavatelli** – perfect for pairing with greens and olive oil-based sauces.

Simple ingredients. Timeless recipes. Real Italian flavor.

If you make this dish, leave a comment below and let me know how you served it – I love seeing how these recipes come to life in your kitchen ☐

Italian Kale and Potatoes



Golden potatoes, tender Tuscan kale, and juicy blistered cherry tomatoes tossed with garlic and a little heat . Simple ingredients, big Italian flavor.

- 1 1/2 lbs. potatoes (cubed)
- 1 large bunch Tuscan kale
- 3 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes
- 1 Tbsp. garlic (minced)
- 1 tsp. red pepper flakes

- 1 cup white wine
- salt and pepper to taste

1. **Parboil the Potatoes**

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the cubed potatoes and cook for about 8–10 minutes, just until fork-tender but not falling apart. Add the kale and cook 5 minutes longer. Drain and set aside.

2. **Blister the Tomatoes**

In a large skillet over medium heat, add 1 tablespoon olive oil. Add the cherry tomatoes and cook undisturbed for 3–4 minutes until they begin to blister and burst.

3. **Sauté the Garlic and Kale**

In the same skillet, add the remaining olive oil. Add the sliced garlic and red pepper flakes, cooking for about 30 seconds until fragrant.

Add the chopped Tuscan kale and a pinch of salt. Sauté for 4–5 minutes until wilted and tender. Deglaze the pan with the white wine.

4. **Bring It Together**

Add the drained potatoes back to the skillet. Gently toss everything together and cook for another 3–5 minutes to allow the flavors to meld.

Fold in the blistered cherry tomatoes. Season with salt and black pepper to taste.

Finish with freshly grated Pecorino Romano if desired.

Main Course
Italian
Italian, Tuscan, Kale

Persimmon Carpaccio Salad (Italian Style)

Persimmon Carpaccio Salad (Italian Style)

This elegant **Persimmon Carpaccio Salad** is a simple yet stunning Italian-inspired winter dish. If you love seasonal produce and beautiful plating, this recipe is going to be a favorite. Thinly shaved Fuyu persimmons create a vibrant, sweet base that pairs perfectly with peppery arugula, crisp shaved fennel, toasted walnuts, and salty Parmigiano. It's light, fresh, and absolutely perfect for holiday gatherings, dinner parties, or as a bright starter to any Italian meal.

In Italy, carpaccio-style dishes are all about showcasing the beauty of the ingredients with minimal dressing—and persimmons shine beautifully prepared this way.

Things to know about this Persimmon Carpaccio Salad (Italian Style)

- **Use Fuyu persimmons**, not Hachiya—Fuyus are firm and perfect for shaving paper-thin.

- A **mandoline** gives the most even slices, but a very sharp knife works too.
 - This dish is best served **immediately after dressing** so the persimmons stay crisp.
-

Variations

- **Honey drizzle:** Add a touch of honey if you prefer a sweeter profile.
 - **With prosciutto:** Lay thin prosciutto slices over the persimmons for a sweet-salty bite.
 - **Citrus version:** Add orange zest or a few citrus segments.
 - **Add burrata:** For a creamier dish, serve with small pieces of burrata.
-

Storage

This salad is best enjoyed fresh.

If prepping ahead:

- Shave the persimmons up to **2 hours in advance** and store covered in the refrigerator.
- Shave fennel and store in ice water for crispness. Dress only when ready to serve.

• **Looking for More Seasonal Recipes?**

Browse some of my winter favorites:

- ☐ **Orecchiette with Italian Sausage and broccoli rabe**
- ☐ **Creamy Italian Sausage Risotto**
- ☐ Braised cabbage wedges with pancetta

Cozy, comforting, and full of Italian flavor.





Persimmon Carpaccio Salad (Italian Style)

Servings: 4

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 10 minutes

Ingredients

- **3 ripe Fuyu persimmons**, peeled and thinly shaved into rounds
- **1 cup arugula**
- **$\frac{1}{2}$ small fennel bulb**, shaved very thin
- **2 tablespoons toasted walnuts**, roughly chopped
- **$\frac{1}{4}$ cup shaved Parmigiano-Reggiano**
- **1–2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil**
- **1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice** *or* a splash of white balsamic vinegar
- **Sea salt**, to taste
- **Fresh cracked black pepper**, to taste
- **Fennel fronds**, for garnish
- *Optional*: a sprinkle of pomegranate arils for color

Instructions

- 1. Lay out the carpaccio:** Arrange the thinly shaved persimmon slices in a beautiful overlapping layer on a large round platter.
- 2. Add the vegetables:** Scatter shaved fennel on top. Add a

small handful of arugula for freshness and contrast.

3. **Dress the salad:** Drizzle evenly with extra virgin olive oil and fresh lemon juice or white balsamic.
 4. **Season:** Sprinkle lightly with sea salt and freshly cracked pepper.
 5. **Finish:** Add toasted walnuts, shaved Parmigiano, and fennel fronds. Serve immediately.
-

Cabbage & Apple Holiday Slaw

Cabbage & Apple Holiday Slaw

I think cabbage is underrated. It's one of those ingredients we often overlook, yet it brings so much crunch, sweetness, and freshness to a holiday spread. While everyone gravitates toward the heavier, richer dishes this time of year, I always find myself craving something bright that cuts through all that indulgence. That's where this Cabbage & Apple Holiday Slaw comes in.

It's crisp, colorful, and so refreshing—shredded cabbage and carrots tossed with thin slices of sweet apple, toasted pecans for warmth, and just enough shaved Parmesan to give it that savory Italian touch. Then everything gets coated in a creamy apple-cider vinaigrette that ties it all together. It's the kind of side dish that not only balances your table but also surprises people with how simple and delicious it is. I make it every year, and there are never leftovers.

Things to know about this Cabbage & Apple Holiday Slaw

This slaw is incredibly make-ahead friendly, which makes it perfect for busy holiday cooking. You can shred the cabbage and carrots, slice the apples, and even mix the dressing a day in advance—just keep everything separate until you're ready to serve. The salad stays crisp for hours after dressing thanks to the sturdiness of the cabbage. You can also swap pecans for walnuts, add dried cranberries for a sweeter touch, or use Asiago instead of Parmesan for a sharper flavor. It's a flexible, crowd-pleasing side dish that fits into any Christmas or holiday menu.

Variations

- **Cranberry Twist:** Add dried cranberries or pomegranate seeds for color and sweetness.
- **Walnut & Blue Cheese:** Use toasted walnuts and crumbled gorgonzola for a bold flavor.
- **Maple Dijon:** Swap honey for maple syrup and add extra Dijon mustard.
- **Creamy Italian:** Add Greek yogurt or sour cream to the dressing and include shaved fennel.
- **Apple & Pear:** Use a mix of thinly sliced apples and pears.
- **Nut-Free:** Replace nuts with pumpkin seeds or sunflower seeds.
- **Savory Version:** Skip the honey and apple. Add red onion, extra vinegar, and red pepper flakes.

If you love fresh and festive holiday sides, pair this slaw with:

- **Italian Holiday Chicken Soup**
- **Savory Sausage & Mushroom**
- **The Ultimate Thanksgiving dinner Guide**





Cabbage & Apple Holiday Slaw

- **Servings:** 6
- **Prep Time:** 15 minutes
- **Chill Time:** 20 minutes (optional but recommended)

Ingredients

For the slaw:

4 cups shredded green cabbage

1 cup shredded carrots

2 large crisp apple, thinly sliced (Honeycrisp or Pink Lady)

1 cup toasted pecans

1 Tbsp. fresh or dried thyme

1/2 cup shaved Parmesan (or Asiago)

Creamy Apple-Cider Vinaigrette:

1 cup plain Greek yogurt or mayonnaise

1/3 cup olive oil

1/3 cup apple cider vinegar

1 Tbsp. honey

1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard

1 small garlic clove, grated

Salt and black pepper to taste

Instructions

1. In a large mixing bowl, combine the shredded cabbage, shredded carrots, apple slices, toasted pecans, shaved Parmesan, and thyme.
2. In a separate small bowl, whisk together the mayo, olive oil, apple cider vinegar, honey, Dijon, grated garlic,

salt, and pepper until smooth.

3. Pour the dressing over the slaw and toss gently to evenly coat.
 4. Chill for at least 20 minutes before serving to let the flavors meld.
 5. Garnish with extra pecans and thyme before serving.
-

Creamy Broccoli Cheddar Soup

Creamy Broccoli Cheddar Soup

In our diners – we had two of them over the years – soup was always a big part of the menu. No matter the season, our customers loved starting their meal with something warm and homemade. We made fresh soup every morning, and this **creamy broccoli cheddar soup** was one of the favorites. The smell of onions, garlic, and melted cheddar filled the kitchen, and before lunchtime, we'd already have regulars asking, "*Is the broccoli soup ready yet?*" It's the kind of cozy, comforting bowl that takes me right back to those busy diner days.

Things to know about Creamy Broccoli Cheddar Soup

This creamy broccoli cheddar soup is not only comforting but also incredibly easy to make – it's ready in just **30 minutes!** You can make it ahead of time and simply reheat it for a quick lunch or dinner. It's also **freezer-friendly**, so you can store

leftovers for later without losing any of that cheesy, creamy goodness.

For some tasty variations:

- **Add protein:** Stir in cooked chicken or crispy bacon for a heartier meal.
- **Make it spicy:** Sprinkle in extra red pepper flakes or a dash of cayenne for a little kick.
- **Veggie twist:** Swap some of the broccoli with cauliflower or carrots for a slightly different flavor and color.
- **Cheese upgrade:** Try mixing in Gruyère or smoked cheddar for a richer, deeper flavor.

This soup is versatile, quick, and perfect for busy weeknights or cozy weekends.

If you love this **creamy broccoli cheddar soup**, be sure to check out some of our other cozy favorites on the blog: try our **creamy potato leek soup** or **Italian sausage gnocchi soup** for more quick and comforting meals. Don't forget to **browse all our soup recipes** for even more easy weeknight ideas! Just type in SOUP in the search bar. ENJOY!!!





Creamy Broccoli Cheddar Soup

Serves: 4

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 25 minutes

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons butter (or olive oil)
- 1 cup grated onion
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup shredded carrots
- 4 cups chopped broccoli florets
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 3 cups chicken or vegetable stock
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional, for a little heat)
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Instructions

1. **Sauté aromatics:**

In a large pot, or Dutch oven melt the butter over medium heat. Add the grated onion and garlic, and cook for 2–3 minutes until fragrant and soft.

2. **Add vegetables:**

Stir in the shredded carrots and chopped broccoli. Sauté for 3–4 minutes, just until the broccoli begins to soften.

3. **Make a light roux:**

Sprinkle in the flour and stir to coat the vegetables evenly. Cook for about 1 minute to

remove the raw flour taste.

4. Add stock:

Gradually whisk in the chicken or vegetable stock, stirring constantly until smooth. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook for 10–12 minutes, or until the broccoli is tender.

5. Add cream and cheese:

Lower the heat and stir in the heavy cream, followed by the shredded sharp cheddar. Stir until melted and creamy. Season with salt, pepper, and red pepper flakes.

6. Serve:

Ladle into bowls and serve hot with extra cheddar on top and crusty bread on the side.

Spinach and Mushroom Lasagna with Béchamel Sauce

Spinach and Mushroom Lasagna with Béchamel Sauce

There's something so comforting about a bubbling pan of lasagna fresh out of the oven – those golden edges, the creamy layers, and the aroma that fills the kitchen. This Spinach and Mushroom Lasagna with Béchamel Sauce is one of those dishes that feels special, yet it's surprisingly simple to make.

Instead of spending hours making fresh pasta sheets, I take a little help from the store and use ready-made lasagna noodles. Whether you use oven-ready or the traditional kind that needs a quick boil, they both make this recipe quick and effortless without sacrificing that homemade taste. The real magic happens in the layering – a silky béchamel sauce, savory mushrooms, tender spinach, and plenty of gooey mozzarella and Parmesan come together in perfect harmony.

It's a vegetarian lasagna that's creamy, hearty, and satisfying enough to please everyone at the table. Perfect for a cozy Sunday dinner, make-ahead meal, or even a holiday side – this is the kind of recipe that proves delicious doesn't have to mean complicated.

Things to know about this Spinach and Mushroom Lasagna with Béchamel Sauce

- **Wetting the noodles:** If you're using oven-ready noodles, dip them briefly in warm chicken stock before layering. This adds extra flavor and ensures the noodles soften perfectly in the oven without drying out. (Vegetable stock works great, too, for a fully vegetarian version.)
- **Béchamel consistency:** The sauce should be thick enough to coat the back of a spoon but still pourable – if it's too thick, whisk in a splash of warm milk.
- **Layering tip:** Start and finish with béchamel – it keeps the noodles moist and prevents the edges from getting too crispy.
- **Add extra veggies:** Try mixing in sautéed zucchini, roasted red peppers, or even a handful of chopped artichokes for extra color and flavor.

- **Make ahead:** Assemble the lasagna a day in advance and refrigerate. When ready to bake, let it sit at room temperature for 30 minutes before going in the oven.
- **Freezes beautifully:** Slice leftovers and freeze individually for easy weeknight reheating.

▪ **Craving More Cozy Italian Comfort?**

If you loved this creamy Spinach and Mushroom Lasagna with Béchamel Sauce, be sure to try my Sausage Stuffed Shells with Béchamel Sauce or Italian sausage and potatoes stove top recipe Both are rich, flavorful, and perfect for easy weeknight dinners or relaxed weekend meals.





Spinach and Mushroom Lasagna with

Béchamel Sauce

Ready in: 1 hour 15 minutes

□ **Serves: 6–8**

Ingredients

- **For the béchamel sauce:**

- 4 tablespoons butter
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour
- 4 cups whole milk, warmed
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- A pinch of nutmeg

- **For the filling:**

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 12 ounces mushrooms, sliced (cremini or button)
- 1 (10-ounce) package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and well-drained
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated Parmesan cheese

- **For assembling:**

- 9 store-bought lasagna noodles (oven-ready or pre-cooked)

- 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated Parmesan cheese

Instructions

1. Make the béchamel sauce:

In a medium saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Whisk in the flour and cook for about 1 minute. Gradually add the warm milk while whisking continuously until the sauce thickens, about 5–7 minutes. Season with salt, pepper, and nutmeg. Set aside.

2. Prepare the filling:

Heat olive oil in a large pan over medium heat. Add onion and garlic; cook until softened. Add mushrooms and sauté until golden and most of the moisture has evaporated. Stir in spinach, season with salt and pepper, and cook for 2 minutes. Remove from heat.

3. Assemble the lasagna:

Spread a thin layer of béchamel sauce over the bottom of a 9×13-inch baking dish. Add a layer of noodles, followed by half of the spinach-mushroom mixture, a few spoonful's of béchamel, a sprinkle of Parmesan, and a layer of mozzarella.

Repeat the layers, finishing with noodles, the remaining béchamel sauce, mozzarella, and Parmesan.

4. Bake:

Cover loosely with foil and bake at **375°F (190°C)** for 30 minutes. Remove foil and bake for another 10–15 minutes, until the top is golden and bubbling. Let rest for 10 minutes before slicing.

Baked Spaghetti Squash with Tomato Sauce and Cheese

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When you're craving something cozy yet light, this baked spaghetti squash hits the spot. The squash is roasted until tender, then topped with a rich tomato sauce, shredded mozzarella, and grated parmesan before being baked again until bubbly and golden. It's a beautiful Italian-inspired dish that's simple enough for a weeknight but feels special enough for Sunday dinner.

Things to know about this Baked Spaghetti Squash with Tomato Sauce and Cheese

- **Avoid watery squash:** After roasting, let the squash sit cut side up for a few minutes to release steam before adding sauce. This helps prevent extra moisture.
- **Shortcut tip:** You can microwave the squash for 10–12 minutes if you're short on time – it won't be as caramelized, but it still works beautifully.
- **Make-ahead friendly:** Roast the squash and prepare the sauce a day ahead. When ready to serve, assemble, top with cheese, and rebake until hot and bubbly.

Variations

- **Add protein:** Mix in cooked Italian sausage, ground turkey, or chicken for a heartier version.
- **Creamy twist:** Add a few spoonfuls of ricotta cheese before re baking for a creamy, lasagna-style flavor.
- **Pesto lovers:** Drizzle with homemade basil pesto before serving for an herby burst of freshness.
- **Spicy kick:** Add a pinch of red pepper flakes to the sauce for a little heat.
- Craving more Italian-inspired comfort food?
Check out my **Gnocchi Lasagna Soup** or **Creamy Mushroom Chicken** next!





Baked Spaghetti Squash with Tomato Sauce

and Cheese

Servings: 4

Cook Time: About 1 hour

Ingredients

- 1 medium **spaghetti squash** (about 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ –3 pounds)
- 2 tablespoons **zx** divided
- **Salt and freshly ground black pepper**, to taste
- 2 cups tomato **sauce**
- 2 cloves **garlic**, minced
- 1 teaspoon **dried oregano**
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup **fresh basil**, chopped (plus extra for garnish)
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups **shredded mozzarella cheese**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup **grated parmesan cheese**

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven:

Preheat your oven to **400°F (200°C)**. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

2. Prepare the squash:

Carefully cut the spaghetti squash in half crosswise and scoop out the seeds. Drizzle the inside with **1 tablespoon olive oil**, then season with **salt and pepper**. Place cut side down on the prepared baking sheet.

3. Roast:

Bake for **35–40 minutes**, or until the flesh is tender and easily pulls into strands with a fork. Remove from the oven and let cool slightly.

4. Make the sauce:

While the squash roasts, heat **1 tablespoon olive oil** in a medium size pan over medium heat. Add **garlic** and cook until fragrant, about **1 minute**. Stir in **tomato sauce**, **oregano**, and **basil**. Simmer for **10–15 minutes**, then season with salt and pepper to taste.

5. Combine:

Once the squash is cool enough to handle, use a fork to shred the flesh into spaghetti-like strands. Leave the strands in the shell halves or transfer them to a baking dish. Spoon the **tomato sauce** evenly over the squash and toss gently to combine.

6. Add cheese and rebake:

Top each half (or the baking dish) with **shredded mozzarella** and **grated parmesan**. Return to the oven and bake for **10–15 minutes**, until the cheese is melted and golden.

7. Serve:

Garnish with fresh basil and an extra drizzle of olive oil. Serve hot, right from the shell for a rustic presentation or plated for a cozy Italian-inspired meal

Italian Cauliflower al Forno

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I've always loved cauliflower – it's one of those vegetables that doesn't get nearly enough credit. Too often it's overlooked, but with a little Italian flair, it turns into something truly special. This **Cauliflower al Forno** is proof that simple ingredients can make magic. Roasted until golden, then baked in layers of rich marinara, creamy béchamel, and melted cheese, it's cozy, comforting, and completely irresistible. Whether you serve it as a side or a vegetarian main, this dish will make anyone rethink how delicious cauliflower can be.

Things to know about this Italian Cauliflower al Forno

- **Make ahead:** You can roast the cauliflower and even assemble the dish a day in advance. Just cover and refrigerate, then bake when ready to serve.
- **Reheating:** Warm leftovers in the oven at 350°F until bubbly, or reheat individual portions in the air fryer for a crisp top.
- **Serving idea:** Pair it with a simple green salad, crusty bread, or even over a scoop of creamy polenta for a full meal.
- **Storage:** Keeps well up to 3 days in the fridge – the flavors get even better as they mingle.

• Variations

- **Add Italian sausage:** Brown mild or spicy Italian sausage and scatter it over the roasted cauliflower before baking for extra heartiness.
- **Use other veggies:** Try mixing in roasted zucchini, bell peppers, or mushrooms for more texture and flavor.
- **Make it spicy:** Add a pinch of red pepper flakes to your Easy Marinara Sauce for a little kick.
- **Go cheesy:** Add a layer of ricotta or burrata before topping with mozzarella for an extra creamy version.
- **Lighter option:** Skip the béchamel and just use Easy Marinara Sauce – it's still delicious and a bit lighter.
- If you love this comforting Italian-style cauliflower bake, be sure to try my **Homemade Béchamel Sauce** and **Easy Marinara Sauce** – both add incredible depth and flavor to any baked pasta or veggie dish.
Craving more cozy Italian comfort food? Check out my **Mushroom Sausage Sauce Polenta** or **Creamy Italian Sausage Risotto** next!





. Italian Cauliflower al Forno

Servings: 4-6

Cook Time: 45 minutes

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 medium cauliflower, cut into florets
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp dried thyme or rosemary (optional)
- 2 cups **Easy Marinara Sauce** – use your homemade or store-bought favorite
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 cup **Homemade Béchamel Sauce**
- Fresh basil or parsley for garnish

- **Béchamel Sauce**
 - 2 tbsp butter
 - 2 tbsp all-purpose flour
 - $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups milk
 - Pinch of nutmeg
 - Salt and pepper, to taste

Instructions

1. **Preheat the oven:** 400°F (200°C).

2. Roast the cauliflower:

- Toss cauliflower florets with olive oil, salt, pepper, oregano, and thyme.
- Spread on a baking sheet and roast for 20 minutes until slightly golden.

3. Make the béchamel sauce

- In a small saucepan, melt butter over medium heat.
- Stir in flour and cook 1–2 minutes until lightly golden.
- Gradually whisk in milk, stirring constantly until thickened.
- Season with salt, pepper, and a pinch of nutmeg.

4. Assemble the dish:

- In a baking dish, spread a thin layer of tomato sauce.
- Arrange roasted cauliflower on top.
- Drizzle with béchamel sauce
- Pour remaining tomato sauce over the cauliflower.
- Sprinkle mozzarella and Parmesan evenly on top.

5. Bake: 20–25 minutes until bubbly and golden on top.

6. Garnish and serve: Sprinkle with fresh basil or parsley before serving.