

Cheesesteak Pasta Casserole

Transform Your Weeknight Blah Pasta into a Cheesesteak Pasta Casserole

Pasta is one of my favorite winter comfort foods, not to mention one of my top restaurant “luxury” meals. When I find it difficult to come up with a meal everyone at home will like, I turn to pasta. It’s delicious, plain and simple: think olive oil, garlic, Parmesan, and some herbs. When you add sirloin steak, and a medley of bell peppers, you have a guaranteed crowd pleaser! Steak can be expensive, but if you add it to pasta, it becomes an affordable meal that you can easily include on your weekly menu. Transform your ordinary weeknight pasta into a restaurant-quality meal with this cheesesteak pasta casserole recipe that’s quick, easy, inexpensive, and full of robust flavors.

How to save time and still make a filling meal

This cheesesteak pasta casserole can be on your table in less than an hour, but your family and friends will think it took much longer. How? This recipe calls for ingredients you probably already have on hand: butter, garlic, peppers, and marinara sauce, which together create a creamy, saucy, Italian dinner. It’s a perfect way to show off what a great home chef you are.

You can roast the steak along with the peppers, instead of sautéing it. If I use this method –and I often do for a hands-

free option– I use my toaster oven, instead of heating up my large oven to roast small amounts of meats.

I don't drink alcohol, so I give you options in all of my recipes to use wine or stock; use whatever fits your lifestyle and taste. In some recipes, I do use wine; I'm okay with that, but if you're not, use stock.

In this cheesesteak pasta casserole, I used my homemade marinara sauce.



Here's the recipe for my homemade marinara sauce:

In a 5 quart dutch oven sauté 1 chopped onion, 2 tablespoons chopped garlic, and 1 bunch of Italian parsley until limp.

Add 2 cans (15 oz. ea) crushed tomatoes, 2 cans tomato sauce and 15 oz. of water. Simmer covered for 1 hour, then add 1 bunch basil.

That's how easy making marinara sauce is: just a few

ingredients and a little time. That's right! You don't need hours to make homemade marinara sauce.

About cooking pasta:

- When cooking pasta, salt the water *before* bringing it to a boil. The water should be boiling rapidly before dropping in the pasta.
- I used rigatoni, but you can use any shape or flavor pasta you like. Reserve a few cups of pasta water to add to your sauce if it's too dry.
- It's also easier if the pasta water pan is on the back burner and the sauté pan on the front one. I like this 8 quart stock pot for pasta and soups.
- Use a large enough sauté pan so you don't crowd the ingredients.
- In the restaurant we precooked our pasta halfway and ran it under cold water to stop the cooking process; when we had an order, we put the pasta in a strainer, dropped in boiling water, and it tasted like it was just cooked. You can use the same process at home; if you cook too much, this method will help the pasta stay fresh for 1 to 2 days.

The whole idea behind food and creating recipes is to experiment and have fun doing it!

If you make this recipe, let me know your experience, comments, feedback... whatever you feel like talking about! That's my favorite part. Don't forget to tag me on Instagram!



Ingredients

Serves 4

1 lbs. rigatoni

1 lb. Sirloin steak, cut in strips

2 red and 2 green bell peppers, diced

1 onion, chopped

2 Tbsp. chopped garlic

4 c. homemade or store-bought marinara sauce

2 c. fresh mozzarella

1 c. grated Parmesan cheese

1 c. chicken stock or white wine

1 Tbsp. each chopped Italian parsley, basil, and thyme

2 Tbsp. each olive oil and butter

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 375° F
2. Par boil the pasta
3. Cut the steak into strips
4. Heat oil and butter, and sauté the onion and garlic until opaque
5. Add peppers and sauté until golden, about 5 minutes
6. Add steak and season with salt and pepper **NOW**; sauté steak until golden brown
7. Deglaze the pan with chicken stock or white wine
8. Add prepared marinara sauce
9. Simmer until sauce thickens, about 10 minutes total
10. Add herbs in the last 5 minutes
11. Drain pasta and then toss in sauce
12. Transfer the pasta to an oven-proof covered casserole dish
13. Top cheesesteak rigatoni casserole with the fresh mozzarella and Parmesan cheese
14. Bake covered in a preheated 375° F oven for 20 minutes
15. Uncover and bake 10 minutes longer, or until top is golden brown and cheese is bubbly
16. Top with additional Italian parsley and Parmesan cheese, and salt and pepper to taste

ENJOY!