



Easy Baked Ziti

Ziti al Forno

Yields 6-8 Servings

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 lb. ziti pasta
- 5 cups marinara sauce, or My Mamma's Quick Tomato Sauce
- 1 lb. whole milk ricotta, drained
- 1 (8 oz.) ball of mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 3/4 cup Parmigiano Reggiano cheese
- 1 egg
- 9 fresh basil leaves, chiffonade or 2 tsp. dried
- 2 Tbsp. fresh parsley leaves, minced or 2 tsp. dried
- 1/2 tsp. salt, 1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper or 1 tsp. PGS Pastagirl Seasoning
- 1/2 lb. Italian ground fennel sausage, cooked (optional)



A classic Italian American crowd pleasing dish! Pasta al Forno like lasagna originated in Southern Italy and has been a staple in Sicilian families for generations. The ingredients and comforting flavors will have your guests asking for more. Prep all of the ingredients in advance, assemble the layered dish, then cover with plastic and refrigerate up to 2 days or freeze in an air tight container for 1 month.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Bring a large pot of water to a boil, salt generously and add ziti. Cook the pasta until al dente (tender but still slightly firm). Drain the pasta and return to the same pot.
3. Stir 1 1/2 cups of marinara sauce into the cooked pasta.
4. In a medium bowl, mix together ricotta, 1 cup mozzarella, 1/2 of the Parmigiano Reggiano, egg, parsley, basil, salt and pepper. Refrigerate until ready to use.
5. Spread 1/2 cup of reserved sauce in the bottom of a 13 x 9 x 2-inch baking dish.
6. Layer half of the cooked ziti on top of the sauce, 1/2 of the sausage if using and 1/2 of ricotta filling.
7. Repeat with another layer of the rest of the ziti, sausage, and ricotta filling and 1/2 cup of sauce. Ladle 1 or 2 scoops of sauce more if needed to cover the pasta layers.
8. Sprinkle with the remaining mozzarella and Parmigiano cheese and garnish with minced parsley.
9. Bake uncovered, until browned and bubbly, about 30-40 minutes. Let rest 5-10 minutes before serving.