



[Hearty Italian Baked Ziti](#)

Recipe found on AnnsEntitledLife.com

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cook time: 1 Hour 15 Minutes

Ingredients:

- 16oz Ziti Pasta Noodles
- 3 TBSP Olive Oil
- 1 lb Lean Ground Beef
- ½ tsp Dried Basil
- ½ tsp Thyme
- ½ tsp Oregano
- ½ lb Italian Sausage, ground
- 2 Cloves Garlic, crushed
- 28oz Marinara Sauce
- 14.5oz Fire Roasted Diced Tomatoes
- 16oz Ricotta Cheese
- 1 Large Egg
- 3 cups Shredded Mozzarella Cheese, divided
- 1 cup Shredded Parmesan Cheese

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 375°.
- Spray a 13" x 9" baking dish with non-stick cooking spray; set aside.
- Cook the pasta slightly less than al dente; set aside. (You want the pasta to be a little undercooked so it will not become mushy while it bakes in the oven.)
- While the pasta is cooking, heat the olive oil in a large pan. When the oil is hot, add the ground beef, basil, thyme and oregano. Break the beef up with a spoon and cook over medium heat until cooked.
- In a separate pan, cook the Italian sausage until done, breaking it up into small pieces with your spoon. Drain and set aside.
- Add the crushed garlic and the cooked Italian sausage to the beef mixture; cook for additional

1-2 minutes.

- Add the marinara sauce and diced tomatoes to the meat mixture; bring to a simmer. Continue to cook over medium-low heat for 7 minutes.
- In a separate bowl, mix the ricotta and egg until smooth. Add 2 cups mozzarella and 1 cup Parmesan cheese; stir to combine.
- In a very large bowl, toss the pasta with 3 cups of the pasta sauce; add ricotta mixture. Stir to combine.
- Pour half the mixture into your prepared baking dish and top with half of the remaining sauce. Add the remaining pasta mixture and gently flatten with a spatula. Pour the rest of the sauce over the top and cover tightly with aluminum foil.
- Bake for 45 minutes, uncover and top with 1 cup mozzarella cheese. Bake an additional 5-10 minutes or until the cheese is melted and bubbly.
- Serve hot.

Makes 6 servings Hearty Italian Baked Ziti

Notes:

- To save on bowls to wash, use the pasta pot to mix everything. It's large enough and only had water and pasta in it.
- Additions to consider: extra marina sauce, crushed red pepper, salt and pepper, fresh basil, fresh parsley.
- Cook the Italian sausage separately because it releases a lot of fat. You can drain it, and that helps prevent the sauce from becoming too greasy.
- If you don't have lean ground beef, you'll want to brown that off by itself (with no spices), and then return it to the pan with the spices, sausage and garlic.
- This will keep up to 3 days in the refrigerator and freezes well!