

Italian Pasta Bake

This is comfort food to me – cheesy pasta goodness with a few fresh veggies sprinkled in!

Ingredients:

- 1 Package of Italian Sausages, sliced into ¼ inch rounds (I love the Marc Angelo ones!)
- 1 medium Onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 bell peppers, diced
- 2 cups Fresh Spinach or ½ cup frozen (or Kale)
- 1 jar pasta sauce (I love Classico)
- 1 tbsp Italian Seasoning
- Salt and Pepper to taste
- Cooked pasta (small or elbow pasta) (see notes)
- 1 cup cheese, shredded

Instructions:

1. In a large pan with high sides, cook ground meat at medium/high temperature. Break apart the meat as it cooks. Add in garlic and cloves, mix into the meat. Cook until the meat is no longer pink, approx. 8 minutes.



2. Drain meat fat if desired, set the meat aside on a plate.
3. In the same large pan, add the bell peppers, and baby spinach over medium heat (we used mushrooms too!). Cook for approx. 3-5 minutes until veggies have softened.



4. Add back the meat mixture, pasta sauce, Italian seasoning, desired amount of salt (I recommend 1 tsp) and a few turns of ground pepper. Mix together thoroughly (if you like olives I would recommend you add them at this step!). Lower heat to low/medium and bring the mixture to a simmer for 30 minutes. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.



5. Once the flavours have melded together, add the cooked pasta and $\frac{1}{2}$ the shredded cheese. Give it a good stir.
6. In a large glass lasagne pan, sprayed with non-stick cooking spray, pour in the whole mixture. Spread evenly.
7. Top with the remaining cheese (add more if desired). Bake uncovered for 30 minutes. You may want to put a cookie sheet under the lasagna pan to prevent overflow and spillage.
8. Allow to cool for 5-10 minutes. Cut into slices.

Notes:

- You can use any type of sausages really – just depends on the flavour you are looking for. You could also substitute with a lean ground meat such as, pork, beef etc.
- For the pasta I didn't put an amount because many people have different preferences for how much pasta they would like. Use as much or as little as you'd like! Any small noodle would work fine!
- I recommend cooking the pasta to al-dante – not totally soft as you want to preserve a little cooking time for the tomato sauce, and so the noodles don't go mushy.