

Pasta

- Baked Penne
- Red Sauce (Michael's Way) (Old)
- Pesto Sauce (Michael's Way)
- Slow Cooker Pasta Sauce
- Mac & Cheese

Baked Penne

Source: Allrecipes.com

Modified By: Michael D'Attilo

Ingredients

1lb penne
Olive oil
1/2 white onion, minced
2 shallots, finely chopped
~1.5 tbsp garlic, minced
1 tbsp dried parsley
1 tsp dried oregano
1 tsp dried basil
1lb hot Italian sausage, casing removed (*or 1lb vegetarian 'chopmeat'*)
1/4 cup red wine (optional)
2 15oz can diced tomatoes (*or peeled/stewed tomatoes, crushed with hands or cut with scissors*)
1 15oz can crushed tomatoes
1 6oz can tomato paste
1lb shredded mozz cheese

Directions

Heat olive oil in a medium or large dutch oven, and sautee onion and shallots over medium-high heat until soft and translucent, 3-5 minutes. Add garlic and dried herbs, and cook 30 seconds longer or until aromatic.

Add sausage and fry over high heat, being sure to break sausage up into smaller peices as much as possible. Once sausage has been divided and seared, add wine, tomatoes, and tomato paste. Simmer ingredients until reduced and flavorful.

Boil 1lb penne in salted water until slightly undercooked (1-2 minutes before al dente, as listed on the box). Drain pasta and transfer to a glass or ceramic baking dish; toss with sauce until fully incorporated. Top with shredded mozzarella cheese, and bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes, or until cheese is melted and just starting to brown in places.

Red Sauce (Michael's Way) (Old)

Source: Michael D'Attilio

Ingredients

Mild or neutral Olive Oil (*At least 5oz*)

~12oz of canned Tomato Sauce. (*Del Monte is usually preferable*)

~6lbs of canned crushed/peeled tomatoes. (*Look for low sodium content, or just use Sclafani*)

~2.5 tablespoons chopped garlic.

~1 pack of Basil, finely chopped.

~2/3 bunch of Italian Parsley, finely chopped.

~.5 tablespoons of dried Oregano.

Directions

Heat olive oil in a deep pot, and fry garlic, parsley, basil, and oregano.

When garlic begins to turn slightly brown and starts to smell like garlic, add canned tomatoes and tomato sauce. Cook, stirring, over medium heat until sauce begins to simmer. Remove from heat after simmering for about 6 minutes.

Cost Breakdown

Michael's Red Sauce -- ~\$15.99 (with 2lb of pasta at \$2.19/lb -- \$20.37; 4+ meals for 2 people)

1 ~12 oz can of tomato sauce (Hunts is \$.99 for 15 oz) -- \$.99

~6 lbs of canned crushed tomatoes (Scalfani is \$2.59 for 28 oz) -- \$10.36

~2.5 tbsp chopped garlic (5 bulbs for \$2.49) -- ~\$.49

~1 pack of basil (1 pack for \$3.29) -- \$3.29

2/3 bunch of Italian parsley (1 bunch for \$1.29) -- ~\$.86

~.5 tablespoons of dried oregano – negligible

Mild or neutral Olive Oil – negligible

Pesto Sauce (Michael's Way)

Serves 6-7

3 cups fresh basil leaves

1 clove garlic

3 tbsp pine nuts

1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, freshly grated

2 tablespoons pecorino cheese, freshly grated

3/4 cup olive oil

Salt

Chop the basil leaves and place them in a mortar. Chop the garlic and add, then add the pine nuts. Work the mixture with a pestle until you have a coarse paste. Place the mixture in a bowl, add some of the cheeses. When the mixture becomes too solid to handle, start adding the oil a little at a time. Continue adding cheese, alternating it with the oil. Taste, and add salt to taste. Keep mixing until all the oil has been added.

Alternative: If you have a food processor, use the same proportions but place the basil leaves, the garlic, and the pine nuts in the bowl. Using the sharp blade, run the motor for 3 seconds. Put the mixture into a bowl and set aside.

Place the chunks of Parmesan and Pecorino in the bowl of the food processor and run the motor for 5 seconds. Add the cheeses to the basil mixture and start pouring the oil into the bowl in a steady stream as you would for mayonnaise. Pesto should be thicker than mayonnaise.

Remember to add a couple of tbsp of pasta cooking oil to pesto prior to serving!

Slow Cooker Pasta Sauce

Source: America's Test Kitchen

<https://www.americastestkitchen.com/recipes/10184-slow-cooker-classic-marinara-sauce>

Modified: Michael D'Attilo (in progress?)

SERVES Makes about 10 cups; enough for 2 pounds pasta

TIME 8 to 10 hours on low or 5 to 7 hours on high

Slow cooker size 4 to 7 quarts

Why This Recipe Works

There are many classic pasta sauces that are basically variations on marinara, and we wanted to come up with a formula for making them in the slow cooker, where the long simmering time would render them rich and flavorful. **The biggest hurdle was choosing the right tomato products to create sauces that were neither watery nor too thick.** Our solution was a combination of three different tomato products (paste, crushed, and puree). The concentrated products (paste and puree) provided strong, complex flavor without unwanted water—no need for evaporation. ~~For all these sauces we microwaved onions and aromatics along with tomato paste to create a flavor-packed sauce base, adding other ingredients like anchovies, red pepper flakes, or pancetta to the mix to suit the particular sauce. Seasoning at the end, and adding additional herbs or other ingredients like capers and olives, provided the finishing touches.~~

Ingredients

1 medium onion, minced
6 garlic cloves, minced
2 tsp dried oregano
2 tsp dried basil
1 tsp crushed red pepper
Salt and pepper

4 tbsp olive oil

2 tablespoons tomato paste
2 (28-ounce) cans crushed tomatoes
1 (28-ounce) can tomato puree
½ cup dry red wine (1/4 cup wine vinegar?)
2 teaspoons sugar, plus extra for seasoning

Directions

~~1. Microwave onions, garlic, tomato paste, oil, oregano, and 1 teaspoon salt in bowl, stirring occasionally, until onions are softened, about 5 minutes; transfer to slow cooker. Stir in tomatoes, tomato puree, and wine. Cover and cook until sauce is deeply flavored, 8 to 10 hours on low or 5 to 7 hours on high.~~

~~2. Stir sugar into sauce. Season with salt, pepper, and extra sugar to taste. Before serving, stir in 2 tablespoons basil for every 5 cups sauce.~~

1. Combine onion, garlic, and dried spices in food processor to mince.
2. Sautée onion/spices mix in skillet with 4tsp olive oil until onions are soft and mixture is aromatic
3. Combine oil mix, canned tomatoes, wine/vinegar, and sugar in crock pot.

Cook for 6-10 hours. Low-effort sauce ideal for stewing larger meatballs, sausages, etc. without as much active attention as a proper Sunday gravy...

Mac & Cheese

Ingredients

1 ½ cups water
1 cup milk
8 ounces elbow macaroni
4 ounces American cheese, shredded (1 cup)
½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
Small pinch cayenne pepper
4 ounces extra-sharp cheddar cheese, shredded (1 cup)
⅓ cup panko bread crumbs
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
Salt and pepper
2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

Barilla makes our favorite elbow macaroni. Because the macaroni is cooked in a measured amount of liquid, we don't recommend using different shapes or sizes of pasta. Use a 4-ounce block of American cheese from the deli counter rather than presliced cheese.

1. Bring water and milk to boil in medium saucepan over high heat. Stir in macaroni and reduce heat to medium-low. Cook, stirring frequently, until macaroni is soft (slightly past al dente), 6 to 8 minutes. Add American cheese, mustard, and cayenne and cook, stirring constantly, until cheese is completely melted, about 1 minute. Off heat, stir in cheddar until evenly distributed but not melted. Cover saucepan and let stand for 5 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, combine panko, oil, 1/8 teaspoon salt, and 1/8 teaspoon pepper in 8-inch nonstick skillet until panko is evenly moistened. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, until evenly browned, 3 to 4 minutes. Off heat, sprinkle Parmesan over panko mixture and stir to combine. Transfer panko mixture to small bowl.

3. Stir macaroni until sauce is smooth (sauce may look loose but will thicken as it cools). Season with salt and pepper to taste. Transfer to warm serving dish and sprinkle panko mixture over top. Serve immediately.

Price Evaluation

Mac and Cheese -- ~\$5.63; 1 meal for 2 people
1 cup milk (1/2 gallon for \$3.99) -- ~\$.50
8 ounces elbow macaroni (1 lb for \$2.19) -- ~\$1.10
4 ounces American cheese, shredded (\$5.49/lb) -- ~\$1.37
½ teaspoon Dijon mustard -- negligible
Small pinch cayenne pepper -- negligible
4 ounces extra-sharp cheddar cheese, shredded (\$9.99/lb) -- ~\$2.50

1/3 cup panko bread crumbs (4 cups for \$1.89) -- ~\$.16

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil -- negligible

Salt and pepper -- negligible

2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese -- negligible