

Set It and Forget It: The Easiest Crockpot Baked Ziti Recipe

you don't have to cook the pasta



OVEN
350°F

TIME
3 min

METHOD
Slow cooker

PRINT
Recipe Card

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb ground beef or Italian sausage
- 1 jar (24 oz) marinara sauce
- 1 can (15 oz) tomato sauce
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning
- Salt & pepper to taste
- 16 oz uncooked ziti pasta
- 1 cup ricotta cheese
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- Fresh basil or parsley, for garnish (optional)

DIRECTIONS

- 1.** Brown the : Meat: In a skillet, cook the ground beef or sausage until fully browned. Drain any excess grease.
- 2.** Make the : Sauce: Stir in marinara, tomato sauce, water, garlic powder, Italian seasoning, salt, and pepper. Let it simmer for 2-3 minutes.
- 3.** Layer in the : Slow Cooker: Spread a thin layer of the meat sauce on the bottom.
- 4.** Add half the uncooked ziti.
- 5.** Drop spoonfuls of ricotta on top.
- 6.** Sprinkle with a handful of mozzarella.
- 7.** Pour over more sauce.
- 8.** Repeat: Repeat the layers-ziti, ricotta, mozzarella, sauce.
- 9.** Top it : Off: Finish with the remaining sauce, then top with mozzarella and Parmesan.
- 10.** Cook: Cover and cook on LOW for 4-5 hours. Start checking around 4 hours to avoid mushy pasta.
- 11.** Rest & : Serve: Let it sit uncovered for 10 minutes before serving. Garnish with fresh herbs if desired.

SWAPS & NOTES

& Swaps Meat: Italian sausage adds spice, but lean ground beef or even ground turkey works great.

Sauce: Use your favorite jarred marinara or homemade if you've got it.

Ricotta: Can be swapped with cottage cheese for a lighter version.

Pasta: Regular ziti holds up best-avoid gluten-free or chickpea pastas which may break down. ???

