

How to Make Baked Ziti in a Slow Cooker - No Pre-Boiling Needed

Weeknight dinners don't get much easier-or more comforting-than



TIME
10 min

METHOD
Slow cooker

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INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound uncooked ziti or penne pasta
- 3 cups marinara sauce (use your favorite jarred or homemade)
- 1 cup water or low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 cup ricotta cheese
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 egg (optional, helps bind ricotta)
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder

Salt and pepper to taste

Fresh basil or parsley (for garnish, optional)

Swaps & Notes:

No ricotta? Use cottage cheese or a mix of cream cheese and sour cream.

Want meat? Brown 1 lb of ground beef, sausage, or turkey and layer it in.

Gluten-free? Use a certified GF pasta, but reduce liquid slightly and monitor doneness.

Extra veggies? Add chopped spinach, zucchini, or mushrooms in layers.

Instructions:

Mix the ricotta layer
In a bowl, combine ricotta, egg (if using), garlic powder, Italian seasoning, salt, pepper, and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Parmesan. Set aside.

Grease your slow cooker
Spray the inside with cooking spray to prevent sticking.

Layer the ingredients Start with 1 cup of marinara sauce on the bottom.
Add half the uncooked ziti.
Dollop half the ricotta mixture.
Sprinkle 1 cup mozzarella.
Repeat: sauce -> pasta -> ricotta -> mozzarella.
Pour remaining sauce and water/broth evenly over the top.
Sprinkle the rest of the Parmesan.
Cook Cover and cook on LOW for 3% to 4% hours, or until pasta is tender.
Avoid lifting the lid too often-trust the process!
Finish Optional: Add more mozzarella in the last 10 minutes, cover until melted.
Garnish with fresh basil or parsley before serving.
Tips for Success:
Use regular (not oven-ready) pasta for best results.
If the sauce is very thick, add an extra splash of water.
Resist the urge to stir mid-cooking. It cooks more evenly layered.
Serving Suggestions & Pairings:

DIRECTIONS

1. Mix the ricotta layer: In a bowl, combine ricotta, egg (if using), garlic powder, Italian seasoning, salt, pepper, and ... cup Parmesan. Set aside.
2. Grease your slow cooker: Spray the inside with cooking spray to prevent sticking.
3. Layer the ingredients : Start with 1 cup of marinara sauce on the bottom.
4. Add half the uncooked ziti.
5. Dollop half the ricotta mixture.
6. Sprinkle 1 cup mozzarella.
7. Repeat: sauce -> pasta -> ricotta -> mozzarella.
8. Pour remaining sauce and water/broth evenly over the top.
9. Sprinkle the rest of the : Parmesan.
10. Cook : Cover and cook on LOW for 3% to 4% hours, or until pasta is tender.
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12. Finish : Optional: Add more mozzarella in the last 10 minutes, cover until melted.
13. Garnish with fresh basil or parsley before serving.
14. Tips for Success: Use regular (not oven-ready) pasta for best results.
15. If the sauce is very thick, add an extra splash of water.
16. Resist the urge to stir mid-cooking. It cooks more evenly layered.
17. Serving Suggestions & Pairings: Serve your slow cooker baked ziti with:
18. A simple green salad and garlic bread

19. A chilled drink like this : Blueberry Lemonade
20. Need more crowd-pleasers? Try these Sheet Pan Quesadillas or this Crockpot Nacho Dip
21. Storage & Leftovers: Refrigerate: Store in an airtight container for up to 4 days.
22. Freeze: Portion into freezer-safe bags or containers for up to 2 months. Thaw overnight and reheat in the microwave or oven.
23. Reheat: Add a splash of water before reheating to keep it from drying out.
24. More Recipes You'll Love: If you enjoyed this easy baked ziti, you'll love these comfort food favorites:
25. Dorito : Casserole

SWAPS & NOTES

Use cottage cheese or a mix of cream cheese and sour cream.
Brown 1 lb of ground beef, sausage, or turkey and layer it in.

Use a certified GF pasta, but reduce liquid slightly and monitor doneness.

Add chopped spinach, zucchini, or mushrooms in layers.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

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More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/how-to-make-baked-ziti-in-a-slow-cooker-no-pre-boiling-needed/>