

Creamy Bacon Pasta Bake: The Ultimate Comfort Food

I'm a huge fan of meals that deliver big on flavor and comfort with minimal fuss, and this



OVEN
375°F

TIME
5-7 min

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INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cups milk (whole milk recommended for creaminess)
- 10.5 ounces can cream of chicken soup (undiluted)
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 pound uncooked spaghetti
- 1 cup grated mozzarella cheese
- 1 cup grated cheddar cheese
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup bacon, cooked and crumbled
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped (for garnish)

Swaps and Notes:

Bacon: For best results, cook your own bacon until crispy and then crumble it. The bacon grease from cooking can be used in place of (or in addition to) the olive oil for even more flavor. Pre-cooked bacon bits can be used for a shortcut.

Pasta: While spaghetti is classic, other pasta shapes like penne, rotini, or fettuccine would also work well with this creamy sauce.

Onion & Garlic: Finely chopping the onion ensures it softens and blends into the sauce. Freshly minced garlic is always best for flavor.

Milk: Whole milk provides the creamiest texture for

the sauce. You can use 2% milk, but the sauce might be slightly less rich.

Cream of Chicken Soup: This acts as a thickener and flavor enhancer. You can substitute with cream of mushroom or celery soup if preferred, though it will alter the flavor profile slightly.

Cream Cheese: Ensure your cream cheese is softened to room temperature for easier whisking and a smooth sauce.

Cheese Blend: The combination of mozzarella and cheddar is excellent, but feel free to adjust.

Colby Jack or a Mexican blend would also be good melting options. Freshly grated cheese melts better than pre-shredded.

Seasoning: Adjust salt and pepper to taste. A pinch of garlic powder or onion powder could be added to the sauce for extra depth. For a bit of heat, a dash of red pepper flakes would be delicious.

Fresh Parsley: Adds a lovely fresh finish and pop of color.

Instructions:

Preheat Oven: Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C).

Cook Spaghetti: Bring a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil. Add the 1 pound of uncooked spaghetti and cook according to package directions until al dente (still firm to the bite). Rinse and drain the spaghetti under cold water to prevent it from sticking together and to stop the cooking process. Set aside.

Sauté Aromatics: In a large pot or Dutch oven (one that's oven-safe for later is ideal), heat the 1 tablespoon of olive oil over medium-high heat. Once the oil is hot, add the chopped onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion has softened and become translucent, about 5-7 minutes. Add the minced garlic and continue cooking for 1 minute more, or until the garlic is fragrant.

Create Cream Sauce: Reduce the heat to medium-low. Add the 3/4 cups of milk, the 10.5 ounces can of cream of chicken soup, the 8 ounces of softened cream cheese, 1 teaspoon of salt, and 1/2 teaspoon of black pepper to the pot. Cook, stirring constantly, until the cream cheese has completely melted and the sauce is smooth and creamy. Bring it to a gentle simmer.

Combine Pasta & Sauce: Add the cooked (and drained) spaghetti to the sauce in the pot. Toss the spaghetti gently with tongs or a large spoon to ensure it's fully coated in the creamy sauce.

Transfer the sauced spaghetti mixture into a 9x13-inch baking dish.

Top with Cheese & Bacon: Evenly sprinkle the 1 cup of grated mozzarella cheese and 1 cup of grated cheddar cheese over the top of the spaghetti mixture in the baking dish. Scatter 3/4 cup of cooked and crumbled bacon over the cheese layer.

Bake (Covered): Cover the baking dish loosely with aluminum foil. Place it in the preheated oven and cook for 20 minutes. This covered baking helps the flavors meld and ensures everything is heated through.

Bake (Uncovered & Broil): Remove the foil from the baking dish. Return it to the oven and continue cooking, uncovered, for an additional 10 minutes to allow the cheese to melt and become bubbly. For a golden, crispy cheese topping, place the dish under the broiler for the last 3-5 minutes, watching very closely to ensure it doesn't burn.

Serve: Remove the dish from the oven. Let it cool for 5-10 minutes to allow the sauce to set slightly. Serve warm, and sprinkle generously with chopped fresh parsley if desired for a burst of color and freshness.

Tips for Success:

Al Dente Pasta: Cook your spaghetti just to al dente, as it will continue to cook slightly in the oven and absorb the sauce.

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Preheat : Oven:** Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C).
- 2. Cook : Spaghetti:** Bring a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil. Add the 1 pound of uncooked spaghetti and cook according to package directions until al dente (still firm to the bite). Rinse and drain the spaghetti under cold water to prevent it from sticking together and to stop the cooking process. Set aside.
- 3. SautØ Aromatics:** In a large pot or Dutch oven (one that's oven-safe for later is ideal), heat the 1 tablespoon of olive oil over medium-high heat. Once the oil is hot, add the chopped onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion has softened and become translucent, about 5-7 minutes. Add the minced garlic and continue cooking for 1 minute more, or until the garlic is fragrant.
- 4. Create : Cream Sauce:** Reduce the heat to medium-low. Add the 3½ cups of milk, the 10.5 ounces can of cream of chicken soup, the 8 ounces of softened cream cheese, 1 teaspoon of salt, and ¼ teaspoon of black pepper to the pot. Cook, stirring constantly, until the cream cheese has completely melted and the sauce is smooth and creamy. Bring it to a gentle simmer.
- 5. Combine : Pasta & Sauce:** Add the cooked (and drained) spaghetti to the sauce in the pot. Toss the spaghetti gently with tongs or a large spoon to ensure it's fully coated in the creamy sauce. Transfer the sauced spaghetti mixture into a 9x13-inch baking dish.
- 6. Top with : Cheese & Bacon:** Evenly sprinkle the 1 cup of grated mozzarella cheese and 1 cup of grated cheddar cheese over the top of the spaghetti mixture in the baking dish. Scatter ½ cup of cooked and crumbled bacon over the cheese layer.

7. **Bake (Covered):** Cover the baking dish loosely with aluminum foil. Place it in the preheated oven and cook for 20 minutes. This covered baking helps the flavors meld and ensures everything is heated through.
8. **Bake (Uncovered & Broil):** Remove the foil from the baking dish. Return it to the oven and continue cooking, uncovered, for an additional 10 minutes to allow the cheese to melt and become bubbly. For a golden, crispy cheese topping, place the dish under the broiler for the last 3-5 minutes, watching very closely to ensure it doesn't burn.
9. **Serve:** Remove the dish from the oven. Let it cool for 5-10 minutes to allow the sauce to set slightly. Serve warm, and sprinkle generously with chopped fresh parsley if desired for a burst of color and freshness.
10. **Tips for Success: Al Dente Pasta:** Cook your spaghetti just to al dente, as it will continue to cook slightly in the oven and absorb the sauce.
11. **Softened : Cream Cheese:** This is crucial for a smooth, lump-free sauce. Take your cream cheese out of the fridge at least an hour before you start.
12. **Don't : Overcook Garlic:** Garlic burns quickly and can turn bitter. Cook just until fragrant.
13. **Whisk : Cream Sauce Well:** When combining the dairy and cream cheese, whisk well to ensure a smooth consistency.
14. **Broiler : Watch:** Broilers are powerful! Keep a very close eye on the dish during the final broil to prevent the cheese from burning. It can go from perfect to charred in seconds.
15. **Rest : Before Serving:** Allowing the pasta bake to rest for a few minutes after coming out of the oven helps the sauce set up, making it easier to serve and preventing it from being too runny.
16. **Serving Suggestions and Pairings:** This Creamy Bacon Pasta is a hearty and complete meal on its own, but it pairs wonderfully with simple sides:
17. A crisp side salad with a light vinaigrette to cut through the richness.
18. Warm, crusty garlic bread or breadsticks for scooping up every last bit of delicious sauce.
19. Steamed green beans or roasted broccoli for a fresh vegetable accompaniment.
20. For other fantastic comforting pasta and casserole meals, you might also enjoy:
21. **My Classic :** Spaghetti Recipe with Homemade Sauce for a timeless Italian favorite.
22. **My This :** Mexican Chicken and Rice Casserole is My Favorite One-Pan Dinner That's Always a Hit.
23. **Storage and Leftover Tips:** Leftover Creamy Bacon Pasta can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3-4 days. The pasta will continue to absorb the sauce and thicken upon standing. To reheat, gently warm individual portions in the microwave or in a skillet over low heat, adding a splash of milk or broth to loosen the sauce and restore creaminess.
24. **More Recipes You Will Love:** If you loved the easy, comforting, and incredibly cheesy nature of this pasta

dish, you'll find similar satisfaction in these other fantastic recipes:

25. For another easy weeknight solution, check out my This Dorito Casserole is My Favorite Weeknight Dinner Shortcut.

SWAPS & NOTES

Bacon: For best results, cook your own bacon until crispy and then crumble it.

The bacon grease from cooking can be used in place of (or in addition to) the olive oil for even more flavor.

Pre-cooked bacon bits can be used for a shortcut.

Pasta: While spaghetti is classic, other pasta shapes like penne, rotini, or fettuccine would also work well with this creamy sauce.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Al Dente Pasta: Cook your spaghetti just to al dente, as it will continue to cook slightly in the oven and absorb the sauce.

Softened Cream Cheese: This is crucial for a smooth, lump-free sauce.

Take your cream cheese out of the fridge at least an hour before you start.

Don't Overcook Garlic: Garlic burns quickly and can turn bitter.

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

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/creamy-bacon-pasta-bake-the-ultimate-comfort-food/>