

Cheesy Cowboy Spaghetti Bake with Bacon and Jalapeños - Bold, Spicy Comfort Food

When I'm craving a pasta dish that's



OVEN
375°F

TIME
15 mins

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INGREDIENTS

- 12 oz spaghetti
- 1 lb ground beef
- 4 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled
- 1 small onion, diced
- 2 jalapeños, sliced (remove seeds for less heat)
- 2 cups marinara sauce
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 ½ cups shredded cheddar cheese
- ½ cup shredded pepper jack cheese
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp black pepper

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Cook the Spaghetti:
2. Sauté the Beef and Veggies:
3. Build the Sauce:
4. Combine and Transfer:
5. Top and Bake:
6. Serve and Enjoy:

Pro Tips for the Best Cowboy Spaghetti Bake:

Use freshly shredded cheese - It melts smoother and gives better texture than pre-shredded cheese.

Want more heat? Add a pinch of cayenne pepper or drizzle with hot sauce before baking.

Make it ahead - You can assemble the casserole up

to 24 hours in advance and bake it fresh when ready.

Swap the meat - Try using ground turkey or spicy Italian sausage for different flavor profiles.

Go veggie-friendly - Replace the beef with sautéed mushrooms and black beans for a hearty vegetarian version.

What to Serve with Cowboy Spaghetti Bake:

A crisp green salad with ranch or creamy Italian dressing.

Garlic bread or cheesy breadsticks to soak up any extra sauce.

Roasted vegetables like broccoli or Brussels sprouts for a little balance.

Cornbread or buttermilk biscuits for a true Southern-inspired meal.

FAQs (From My Kitchen to Yours):

Why This Cowboy Spaghetti Bake Deserves a Spot on Your Table:

DIRECTIONS

1. **Cook the Spaghetti:** I start by cooking the spaghetti according to package instructions. Once it's al dente, I drain it and set it aside.
2. **Sauté the Beef and Veggies:** In a large skillet over medium heat, I cook the ground beef with the diced onion, sliced jalapeños, smoked paprika, garlic powder, salt, and pepper. I stir frequently, breaking up the beef and cooking until it's browned and the onions are soft.
3. **Build the Sauce:** Once the beef is cooked, I stir in the marinara sauce and heavy cream, letting the mixture simmer for about 5 minutes. This step creates a rich, creamy, and slightly spicy sauce that smells amazing as it simmers.
4. **Combine and Transfer:** I toss the cooked spaghetti into the skillet with the sauce and mix well, making sure every strand is coated. Then, I transfer the mixture to a greased baking dish.
5. **Top and Bake:** I sprinkle the top generously with shredded cheddar, pepper jack cheese, and crumbled bacon. Then it goes into a preheated oven at 375°F (190°C) for 20 minutes, until the cheese is melted, bubbly, and golden on top.
6. **Serve and Enjoy:** Once out of the oven, I let it rest for just a couple of minutes, then serve hot. I like to garnish with a few extra jalapeño slices or fresh chopped parsley for color.
7. **Pro Tips for the Best Cowboy Spaghetti Bake:** Use freshly shredded cheese - It melts smoother and gives better texture than pre-shredded cheese.
8. **Want more heat?** Add a pinch of cayenne pepper or

drizzle with hot sauce before baking.

9. Make it ahead - You can assemble the casserole up to 24 hours in advance and bake it fresh when ready.
10. Swap the meat - Try using ground turkey or spicy Italian sausage for different flavor profiles.
11. Go veggie-friendly - Replace the beef with sautéed mushrooms and black beans for a hearty vegetarian version.
12. What to Serve with Cowboy Spaghetti Bake: This dish is filling on its own, but here are a few sides I like to serve with it:
13. A crisp green salad with ranch or creamy : Italian dressing.
14. Garlic bread or cheesy breadsticks to soak up any extra sauce.
15. Roasted vegetables like broccoli or : Brussels sprouts for a little balance.
16. Cornbread or buttermilk biscuits for a true : Southern-inspired meal.
17. FAQs (From My Kitchen to Yours): Q: Can I make this without jalapeños?A: Absolutely! You can leave them out or substitute with mild bell peppers if you prefer less heat.
18. Q: Can I freeze leftovers?A: Yes! This bake freezes well. Just store in an airtight container for up to 2 months and reheat in the oven at 350°F (175°C) until warmed through.
19. Q: What pasta works best if I don't have spaghetti?A: You can easily use penne, rigatoni, or rotini - just cook until al dente.
20. Why This Cowboy Spaghetti Bake Deserves a Spot on Your Table: If you're looking for a comfort food casserole that's cheesy, smoky, and a little spicy, this Cowboy Spaghetti Bake with Bacon and Jalapeños is the answer. It's the kind of meal that brings everyone to the table hungry and leaves them asking for seconds. Whether for weeknight dinners, game day gatherings, or family potlucks, this dish delivers bold, satisfying flavors every single time.
21. For more delicious comfort food recipes, check out Chef Maniac. And if you make this recipe, let me know if you go bold with the spice or keep it mild - I'd love to hear how you make it your own!

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

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/cheesy-cowboy-spaghetti-bake-with-bacon-and-jalapenos-bold-spicy-comfort-food/>