

Baked Spaghetti with Meat Sauce: An Easy Family Comfort Food Dinner

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OVEN
350°F

TIME
5 to 7 min

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INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound spaghetti
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 can (28 ounces) crushed tomatoes
- 1 can (15 ounces) tomato sauce
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1/2 teaspoon dried basil
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese, optional
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese, optional

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven: Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C) so it is ready once the spaghetti and sauce are combined.
2. Cook the spaghetti: Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and cook the spaghetti until al dente. Drain it and set it aside.
3. Brown the beef: In a large skillet, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the ground beef and cook until browned, breaking it up as it cooks. Drain any excess fat.
4. Sauté the vegetables: Add the diced onion, green bell pepper, red bell pepper, and minced garlic to the skillet with the beef. Cook for 5 to 7 minutes, until the vegetables have softened.
5. Make the meat sauce: Stir in the crushed tomatoes, tomato sauce, Italian seasoning, dried basil, salt, and black pepper. Let the sauce simmer for 15 to 20 minutes so the flavors have time to come together.
6. Combine the pasta and sauce: Add the cooked spaghetti to the meat sauce and toss until the pasta is evenly coated.
7. Transfer to a baking dish: Spoon the spaghetti mixture into a greased baking dish and spread it evenly. Top with mozzarella and Parmesan if using.
8. Bake: Bake uncovered for 20 to 25 minutes, until the casserole is hot and bubbly and the cheese is melted.
9. Serve warm: Let it rest for a few minutes, then serve warm.

SWAPS & NOTES

This recipe is easy to adapt depending on what you have in the kitchen.

Ground beef: You can swap in ground turkey or Italian sausage if you want a slightly different flavor.

Bell peppers: Using both red and green peppers gives a nice balance of sweetness and savory flavor, but you can use just one color if that is what you have.

Cheese: The cheese is optional, but highly recommended if you want that classic baked pasta finish.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Do not overcook the spaghetti during the boiling step.

Since it will continue cooking in the oven, al dente pasta gives you the best final texture.

Let the sauce simmer long enough to build flavor.

Even 15 minutes makes a difference, helping the tomatoes, beef, peppers, and seasonings come together into a richer sauce.

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

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/baked-spaghetti-with-meat-sauce-an-easy-family-comfort-food-dinner/>