

# Italian Rigatoni Bake

## Ingredients

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 lb. ground Italian "mild" sausage
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 28oz. can petite diced tomatoes with juice
- 1 8 oz. can tomato sauce
- 1 T. minced garlic
- 1 16 oz. box rigatoni pasta
- 1 15oz. tub whole milk ricotta cheese
- 1 egg
- 12 oz. shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/4 C. grated parmesan cheese
- 2 T. olive oil
- 3 tsp. Italian seasoning
- pinch red pepper flakes
- pinch of salt and pepper
- dried basil

## Directions

In a large skillet, over med. high heat add the olive oil and onions and sauté till tender (about 5 minutes), add in the ground beef and sausage and cook until browned and cooked through. Drain the grease, leaving a little in the pan for moisture. Add in the garlic, canned tomatoes with juice and the tomato sauce. Stir well, add in 2 tsp. Italian seasoning, pinch of salt and pepper and red pepper flakes. Once combined, remove 1 C. to a bowl and set aside to cool. Cover remaining

sauce and simmer on low for 20 minutes. While the meat sauce is simmering, bring a large pot of water to a boil and cook the pasta with 1 T. of salt till tender. In another bowl, combine ricotta cheese, 1 beaten egg, 1 C. of mozzarella cheese, 1 tsp. italian seasoning and the parmesan cheese. When pasta is done, drain and add to the ricotta mixture stir to combine and then add the cooled sauce to the pasta and combine. In a 10×13 deep sided dish, lightly grease with cooking spray. Layer 1/2 of the noodle mixture in the bottom, top with 1/2 of the meat mixture then 1/2 of the cheese. Repeat for the final layer and sprinkle with dried basil on top of the cheese. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes or until cheese is browning and casserole is bubbly.

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