

Submitted by:
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My Story

This ultimate pasta dish came from a cooking camp I took at the Montessori School when I was in the 1st grade. I have baked it for many special occasions since then, and it is always a hit. Once you get the hang of making a béchamel, it is very easy. It is best when made with fresh mozzarella and San Marzano tomatoes!

My Recipe

Scuderi Fast, Fake-Baked Ziti

1 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, 3 turns of the pan
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 (28-ounce) can whole peeled tomatoes (recommended: San Marzano)
1 (14-ounce) can crushed tomatoes, (recommended: San Marzano)* If San Marzanos are not available, add a teaspoon sugar to your sauce, optional
Coarse salt
A handful fresh basil leaves, torn
1 pound ziti rigate, with ridges
2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
Freshly ground black pepper
A generous grating nutmeg
2 cups whole milk
1/2 cup shredded asiago cheese
1/2 cup shredded Parmigiano-Reggiano
1 cup sliced fresh mozzarella

Crusty bread, to pass at table

Put pasta water on to boil.

In a medium sauce pot over medium heat, saute garlic in extra-virgin olive oil. Chop whole tomatoes and add them to the pan. Add crushed tomatoes and salt and simmer 10 minutes, add basil and simmer over low heat 10 minutes more.

Add salt and pasta to boiling water and cook 6 minutes, leaving pasta a little chewy.

While pasta cooks, melt butter in a small pot over medium heat. Whisk in flour, then cook 1 minute, adding salt and pepper and nutmeg to flour. Add milk and bring sauce to a bubble.

Reduce 5 minutes.

Drain pasta and transfer to a large flameproof casserole dish. Pour the tomato and basil sauce over the pasta and turn to coat the pasta. Pour the bechamel over the already coated pasta. Cover the top of the pasta with Asiago, Parmesan and mozzarella. Place the casserole under hot broiler and melt the 3 cheeses until brown and bubbly, 3 to 5 minutes.