



THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES

A FOOD BLOG

Baked Ziti (from Cooks Illustrated)

Serves 8-10

Healthy tricks: Use 1% cottage cheese, whole wheat pasta, part-skim mozzarella, and 2 teaspoons cornstarch plus 1 cup milk instead of $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon cornstarch with 1 cup heavy cream.

1 pound whole milk or 1% cottage cheese
2 large eggs, lightly beaten
3 ounces parmesan cheese (about $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups), grated
table salt
1 pound ziti pasta
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
5 medium garlic cloves, minced (about 5 teaspoons)
1 (28 ounce) can tomato sauce
1 (14.5 ounce) can diced tomatoes
1 teaspoon dried oregano
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup plus 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil leaves
1 teaspoon sugar
black pepper
 $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon cornstarch
1 cup heavy cream
8 ounces low-moisture mozzarella cheese, cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ inch pieces (about $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups)

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350°F. Whisk cottage cheese, eggs and 1 cup Parmesan together in medium bowl; set aside. Bring 4 quarts of water to boil in large Dutch oven over high heat. Stir in 1 tablespoon salt and pasta; cook, stirring occasionally, until pasta begins to soften but is not yet cooked through, 5 to 7 minutes. Drain pasta and leave in colander.

2. Meanwhile, heat oil and garlic in 12-inch skillet over medium heat until garlic is fragrant but not brown. Stir in tomato sauce, diced tomatoes, and oregano; simmer until thickened, about 10 minutes. Off heat, stir in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup basil and sugar, then season with salt and pepper.

3. Stir cornstarch into heavy cream in small bowl, transfer mixture to Dutch oven set over medium heat. Bring to simmer and cook until thickened, 3 to 4 minutes. Remove pot from heat and add cottage cheese mixture, 1 cup tomato sauce and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup mozzarella, then stir to combine. Add pasta and stir to coat thoroughly with sauce.

4. Transfer pasta mixture to 13- by 9-inch baking dish and spread remaining tomato sauce evenly over pasta. Sprinkle with remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ cup mozzarella and remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Parmesan over top. Cover baking dish tightly with foil and bake for 30 minutes.

5. Remove foil and continue to cook until cheese is bubbling and beginning to brown, about 30 minutes longer. Cool for 20 minutes. Sprinkle with remaining 3 tablespoons basil and serve.