



CHICKEN PARMIGIANA PASTA BAKE

This is an easy weeknight dinner that can be put together in no time.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 T olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 large garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 (24 ounce) jar of your favorite marinara/pasta sauce
- 2 medium chicken breasts (about 1 pound), cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 T chopped fresh basil
- salt and black pepper, to taste
- 1 lb dried pasta gemelli pasta
- 2 C shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/3 C finely shredded parmesan cheese
- 1/4 C panko breadcumbs
- dried Italian herb seasoning blend



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly spray a 3 quart casserole dish with cooking spray. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil.
2. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and garlic and sauté for 6 to 8 minutes or until softened and fragrant. Add tomato sauce and bring to a simmer. Add chicken and simmer for about 10 minutes or until sauce is thickened slightly and chicken is just cooked through. Stir in fresh basil and season generously with salt and pepper.
3. Meanwhile, cook pasta in boiling water until not quite al-dente (subtract 2-3 minutes from the cooking time listed on the package — it will finish cooking in the oven). Reserve a cup or so of pasta water before draining the pasta.
4. Using a large slotted spoon, strain pasta and transfer to sauce. Add a few splashes of pasta water and stir until evenly pasta is evenly coated with sauce.
5. Transfer half of the pasta to the prepared casserole dish, spreading into an even layer. Sprinkle with half of mozzarella and half of parmesan cheese. Top with remaining pasta, followed by the rest of the cheese. Sprinkle with breadcrumbs and Italian herb seasoning.
6. Bake for about 20 to 30 minutes or until cheese is melted and bubbly and pasta is heated through (if your pasta was cool or cold when you put it in the oven—for example if you made the pasta ahead of time and refrigerated it overnight—it will likely need more time). If desired, broil for 2 to 3 minutes at the very end until cheese is browned in spots. Let cool for 5 minutes before serving.