

## Pasta Bakes



These recipes were "invented" by Tim - they're all his own work and very delicious too 😊 In fact the Simple Pasta Bake rates among my most favourite dinners. These are lifted straight from his blog and so are in his own words 😊

They'll serve 2 on their own, but might do 3 or 4 if you add a salad, garlic bread or whatever. You also need (yes need) red wine to go with them (and to add to the sauce). Both start with the same thing:

### **Basic tomato sauce**

Put a large pan over a medium heat and add about **2-3 tablespoons of good quality olive oil**. Fry **1 small finely chopped onion** for a few minutes until softened, then add **2-3 cloves crushed garlic**. After a minute or so add about a **teaspoon of dried oregano** (dried is fine) then just a **splash of red wine**. Turn the heat up slightly then add a standard sized tin (400g) of **chopped tomatoes in juice**. Cook for about 10 minutes until reduced to about 2/3 of the original quantity.

### **Simple Pasta Bake**

As well as the tomato sauce you'll need:

250g pasta (penne)  
1 standard sized mozzarella (drained)  
Grated hard cheese (I prefer a fairly strong cheddar)  
Black pepper

Slice the mozzarella thinly, then chop 2/3 of the slices into small chunks. Throw these into the hot sauce and stir gently until more or less melted. Pour into a casserole dish taking care to ignore the fact that it looks utterly repulsive.

Cook the pasta in boiling water until not-quite done. Drain then add to the sauce, mixing thoroughly and pushing everything down so that the top is level.

Cover with the remaining mozzarella, loads and loads of the grated cheese, and finally loads and loads of freshly ground pepper (for best results crush half a teaspoon of peppercorns in a pestle and mortar)

Bung it in an oven pre-heated to 190°C (gas mark 5) for about 25 minutes.

### **Chicken and Broccoli Pasta Bake**

As well as the tomato sauce you'll need:

250g pasta (fusilli tricolore)  
Chicken - either cook 1 chicken breast or use leftovers  
Broccoli - a handful, chopped into very small florets  
Flour (about a tablespoon)  
Butter (about a tablespoon)  
Milk (about 200ml)  
Grated hard cheese (I prefer a fairly strong cheddar)  
Black pepper

Cook the pasta in boiling water until not-quite done. Drain then add to the tomato sauce, mixing thoroughly and pushing everything down so that the top is level.

Cook the broccoli in boiling water for 1-3 minutes, depending on size (once you get the knack of the timing, you can cook it with the pasta)

Push the chicken and broccoli into the pasta, leaving the tops of the florets poking out so they go nice and crispy.

Make a fairly thin white sauce by adding the milk (cold) to a pan with the butter and flour. Cook over a medium heat - whisking continuously - until thickened. Turn off the heat and add some of the cheese (not too much - it only needs to be slightly flavoured) and a little cream if you have some.

Pour the sauce over the pasta, leaving some of the broccoli poking out, then cover the whole thing with loads of cheese followed by loads of black pepper.

Bung it in an oven pre-heated to 190°C (gas mark 5) for about 25 minutes.