



# Noreen's Kitchen

## Pepperoni Rigatoni Pasta Bake

### Ingredients

#### Makes 2- 9x13 casseroles

1 pound ground beef	6 to 8 ounces thin sliced pepperoni
1 pound ground pork	1 pound Ricotta cheese
1 tablespoon olive oil	2 eggs
1 pound sliced Crimini mushrooms	6 cups shredded Mozzarella cheese
1 medium onion, chopped	1 cup grated parmesan cheese
4 cloves fresh garlic, minced	1 teaspoon dried basil
1 teaspoon salt	1 teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon cracked black pepper	1 teaspoon onion powder
1 teaspoon Italian seasoning	1 pound box rigatoni pasta, cooked
6 cups of your favorite pasta sauce	

### Step by Step Instructions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Brown ground beef and ground pork until cooked. Be sure to break the meat up so it is fine and not too chunky.

Add onions, garlic, mushrooms salt, pepper and Italian seasoning and continue to cook until the mushrooms have softened.

Add sauce to the meat mixture and stir well. Simmer for 10 minutes.

Prepare the cheese mixture by combining ricotta, eggs, dried basil, onion powder, garlic powder and 1 cup of mozzarella cheese and 1/2 cup of grated parmesan. Stir well. Set aside.

Cook pasta a couple of minutes underdone. This will finish cooking in the oven.

Remove 2 cups of meat sauce from the pan and allow it to cool slightly while the pasta cooks.

Drain pasta and allow to sit in the colander while you build the casseroles.

Using the pot the pasta was cooked in, combine the cheese mixture and the reserved 2 cups of meat sauce. Stir well.

Add pasta and stir to coat.

Add the sliced pepperoni and stir to combine.

Divide the pasta mixture between two 9 x 13 deep foil pans.

Top each pan of pasta with half of the meat sauce and then with half of the remaining mozzarella and parmesan cheeses.

Cover each pan with a piece of parchment paper and then cover tightly with aluminum foil. If you are going to freeze one, be sure to include the cooking instructions on the top of the foil. I like to write mine with a sharpie before I cover the pan. Place the casserole to be frozen inside a large 2 gallon zip top bag. Set this on a baking sheet and freeze until solid. Then you can place in your deep freeze or another section of your freezer for later use.

To bake freshly prepared casserole, place on a baking sheet in a 350 degree oven for 30 to 45 minutes until bubbly. Remove from oven and allow to cool for 10 minutes before serving.

To bake the frozen casserole, remove from plastic bag, place on a baking sheet and bake in a 375 degree oven for 60 to 75 minutes until bubbly. Remove from oven and allow to cool for 10 minutes before serving.

Freezer banking is an excellent way to stretch your dollars and your time. It helps you to use what is on sale seasonally and eat at today's price tomorrow!

**Enjoy!**