

“Baked” Ziti with Spinach and Sausage

SERVINGS 4 **PREP/COOK TIME** 1 hour

Notes for the Cook

This streamlined recipe makes cheesy, saucy ziti without the hassle of a traditional casserole. Simmering the pasta until it is only partially cooked keeps it from getting mushy under the broiler.

You can substitute 12 ounces of ziti or medium shells for the penne; however, the cup amounts will vary for different shapes. Make sure you measure by weight.

Part-skim ricotta and part-skim mozzarella cheese can be substituted here if desired. Do not use preshredded cheese.

If sodium is an issue for you, opt for no salt added tomato products in this recipe.

You can substitute ½ teaspoon dried oregano for the fresh.

INGREDIENTS

- 3 garlic cloves
- Fresh oregano
- 7 ounces (7 cups) baby spinach
- 8 ounces hot or sweet italian sausage
- 1 (28-ounce) can tomato sauce
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can diced tomatoes
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- ⅓ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 6 ounces whole-milk mozzarella cheese
- 2 ounces Parmesan cheese
- Fresh basil
- 12 ounces (3 ¾) ziti
- 8 ounces (1 cup) whole-milk ricotta cheese

DIRECTIONS

Prep Ingredients: Mince garlic. Mince 1 ½ teaspoons oregano. Chop spinach coarse. Remove casings from sausage.

Make Sauce: Cook sausage in dutch oven over medium-high heat, breaking meat in ½-inch pieces, until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Stir in garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in tomato sauce, tomatoes and their juice, salt, sugar, red pepper flakes, and oregano and bring mixture to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until thickened, about 10 minutes.

Prep Toppings: While sauce cooks, cut mozzarella in ¾-inch pieces (1 ½ cups). Grate parmesan (1 cup). Chop 6 tablespoons of basil. Adjust oven rack 8 inches from broiler element and heat broiler.

Cook Pasta in Sauce: Stir pasta, 2 cups water, and ¾ cup basil into pot, increase heat to high, and bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium and simmer vigorously, stirring often, until pasta is still very firm but just starting to soften, 6 to 8 minutes.

Add Spinach and Cheeses: Off heat, stir in spinach, ¾ cup mozzarella, and ½ cup parmesan. Dollop surface of pasta evenly with ricotta. Top with remaining ¾ cup mozzarella and remaining ½ cup parmesan.

Broil and Finish Dish: Broil ziti until cheese is bubbling and beginning to brown, 5 to 7 minutes. Transfer pot to wire rack and let cool for 10 minutes. Sprinkle with remaining 2 tablespoons basil and serve.

Celery Gimlet

MAKES 1 cocktail

Why Recipe This Works

Celery flavoring a cocktail? Stay with us here.

Muddled in a cocktail, celery adds refreshing and subtle grassy notes and a beautiful pale green color, creating a sophisticated and unique drink. We chose a classic gimlet—a bright and tart cocktail traditionally made with gin and lime cordial (sweetened lime juice)—in which to muddle celery, knowing that the vegetal flavors of the celery would complement the gin’s botanical notes.

We tested both celery stalks and leaves to see which would provide the most pronounced flavor, finding that muddled stalks gave the best fresh but delicate celery flavor, which paired beautifully with the zingy lime and the herbal notes of the gin.

While gimlets—originally used in the British navy as an appetizing way to prevent scurvy by giving sailors vitamin C-rich lime juice—are now frequently made with sweetened bottled lime cordial, we preferred the flavor of fresh lime juice and Simple Syrup. If you’d like to explore muddle gimlets further, try arugula (yes, really!). Muddled arugula makes a vibrant green drink with a pleasantly peppery aroma and bite; we replaced the traditional gin with vodka to encourage the arugula flavors to shine through.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 small celery rib, chopped, plus celery leaf for garnish
- ¾ ounce Simple Syrup
- 2 ounces London dry gin
- ¾ ounce lime juice

DIRECTIONS

Add celery and simple syrup to base of cocktail shaker and muddle until celery is broken down and all juice has been expressed, about 30 seconds.

Add gin and lime juice, then fill shaker with ice.

Shake mixture until full combined and well chilled, about 30 seconds.

Double-strain cocktail into chilled cocktail glass.

Garnish with celery leaf and serve.