



Dump and Bake Meatball Casserole



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Introduction

Dump and Bake Meatball Casserole is a delicious and easy dish that combines the comforting flavors of meatballs, pasta, and marinara sauce into a single pan meal. Ideal for busy weeknights, this recipe requires minimal prep and delivers a satisfying dinner that the whole family will love. The best part is that it can be made in just one dish, making cleanup a breeze!

Detailed Ingredients with measures

- 1 pound frozen meatballs
- 2 cups uncooked pasta (like rotini or penne)
- 3 cups marinara sauce
- 2 cups water
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- Salt and pepper to taste

Prep Time

The prep time for this Meatball Casserole is approximately 10 minutes. This quick preparation means you can spend more time enjoying your meal and less time in the kitchen.

Cook Time, Total Time, Yield

The cook time is around 45 minutes. In total, from prep to serving, the entire recipe takes about 55 minutes. This recipe yields approximately 6 servings, making it perfect for families or meal prepping for the week ahead.



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Detailed Directions and Instructions

Preheat the Oven

Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C) to ensure it is hot enough when you place the casserole inside.

Prepare the Casserole Dish

Take a 9×13 inch casserole dish and spray it with non-stick cooking spray to prevent the casserole from sticking.

Layer the Ingredients

Start by placing uncooked frozen meatballs evenly in the bottom of the prepared casserole dish.

Add the Pasta

Sprinkle the dry pasta over the meatballs, ensuring it is spread out evenly across the dish.

See also [Chicken Broccoli Potato Casserole](#)

Combine the Sauce

In a mixing bowl, combine the marinara sauce, water, and Italian seasoning. Mix well to ensure everything is incorporated.

Pour the Sauce Mixture

Slowly pour the marinara sauce mixture over the pasta and meatballs in the casserole dish.

Add the Cheese

Sprinkle the shredded cheese on top of the sauce mixture, covering it evenly.

Bake the Casserole

Cover the casserole dish with aluminum foil and bake in the preheated oven for 45 minutes.

Remove the Foil

After 45 minutes, remove the foil and continue baking for an additional 10-15 minutes, or until the cheese is bubbly and golden brown.

Let It Cool

Once baked, remove the casserole from the oven and let it cool for a few minutes before serving to allow it to set.

Notes

Meatball Variations

You can use store-bought frozen meatballs or homemade meatballs, depending on your preference.

Pasta Substitution

Any type of short pasta can be used, such as penne or rotini, provided that it cooks well in the casserole.

Cheese Options

Feel free to use different types of cheese such as mozzarella, cheddar, or a blend according to your taste.

Make Ahead

This casserole can be prepared in advance and stored in the fridge. Just increase baking time if baking from cold.

Leftovers Storage

Store any leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Reheat in the microwave or oven before serving.



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Cook techniques

Baking

Baking is a cooking technique that involves cooking food by surrounding it with dry heat in an oven. For this casserole, the baking process melds flavors and ensures even cooking of the meatballs and pasta.

See also [Parmesan Black Pepper Biscuits Recipe](#)

Dump and Bake

The dump-and-bake method allows you to combine all ingredients in a single dish for minimal prep work. Simply layer the ingredients without the need for precooking, making this technique efficient and time-saving.

Layering

Layering involves arranging ingredients in a specific order, which can help in achieving the best flavor and texture. In this casserole, meatballs are layered with pasta and sauce for even distribution of ingredients.

Combining

Combining is a technique where various ingredients are mixed together to form a cohesive dish. In this recipe, pasta, sauce, and meatballs are combined for a unified flavor profile.

Covering

Covering the casserole while baking helps retain moisture, ensuring that the dish does not dry out during the cooking process. It also aids in

evenly distributing heat throughout the casserole.

Broiling

Broiling is a cooking method that uses high heat from above to brown or caramelize the top layer of food. This technique can add a delicious crispy texture to the casserole's top.

FAQ

Can I use frozen meatballs in this recipe?

Yes, frozen meatballs can be used. There is no need to thaw them prior to adding them to the casserole.

What type of pasta works best for this casserole?

Short pasta varieties, such as penne or rotini, are ideal for this casserole as they hold the sauce and flavors well.

How can I make this dish vegetarian?

To make it vegetarian, you can substitute meatballs with plant-based alternatives and ensure the sauce is veggie-friendly.

Can I prepare this casserole in advance?

Yes, this casserole can be assembled in advance and stored in the refrigerator until you are ready to bake it.

See also [Delicious Nnoch Popcorn Seasoning Recipe](#)

What can I serve with this meatball casserole?

This dish pairs well with a side salad or garlic bread for a complete meal experience.



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Conclusion

The Dump and Bake Meatball Casserole is a fantastic, easy-to-prepare dish that combines the heartiness of meatballs with the comforting texture of pasta and sauce. It's a perfect solution for busy weeknights when you need a satisfying meal without extensive preparation or cleanup. With its versatility and delicious flavor, this casserole is sure to become a family favorite.

More recipes suggestions and combination

Vegetarian Dump and Bake Casserole

Replace meatballs with your favorite vegetables and a hearty grain like quinoa or rice for a filling vegetarian alternative.

Cheesy Chicken and Broccoli Casserole

Substitute meatballs for cooked chicken pieces and add broccoli for a nutritious and cheesy dish that the whole family will love.

Pasta Primavera Bake

Mix in fresh seasonal vegetables with your pasta and sauce for a colorful and flavorful variation that highlights vibrant produce.

Italian Sausage and Peppers Casserole

Swap meatballs for sliced Italian sausage and include colorful bell peppers to add a spicy kick to your bake.

Mexican Dump and Bake Casserole

Incorporate taco-flavored meatballs, corn, black beans, and a spicy salsa to create a zesty Mexican-inspired version of this casserole.



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