

# Homemade Baked Mostaccioli

Classic Baked Mostaccioli with Italian sausage, marinara sauce and melted cheese. Perfect comfort food for family dinners and gatherings.

20 min

PREP

25 min

COOK

45 min

TOTAL

8

SERVINGS

Easy

DIFFICULTY

## Ingredients

- 1 lb pasta
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion
- 2 clove garlic
- 1 lb sausage
- 2 cup marinara sauce
- 2 cup mozzarella cheese
- 1 cup parmesan cheese
- 1 tsp oregano
- 1 tsp basil
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper

## Instructions

### 1 Prepare for cooking

Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Grease a 9x13-inch baking dish with cooking spray or butter.

### 2 Cook the pasta

Bring a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil. Add 1 pound mostaccioli pasta and cook according to package directions until al dente (firm to the bite), about 8-10 minutes. Drain and set aside.

### 3 Prepare the aromatics

Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add 1 diced onion and cook, stirring

occasionally, until soft and translucent, about 5 minutes.

4 Add 2 cloves minced garlic to the skillet and cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 30 seconds.

5 **Brown the sausage**

Add 1 pound Italian sausage to the skillet, breaking it into small pieces with a wooden spoon. Cook, stirring frequently, until browned and no longer pink, about 6-8 minutes.

6 **Make the sauce**

Stir in 2 cups marinara sauce, 1 teaspoon dried oregano, 1 teaspoon dried basil, 1 teaspoon salt, and 1 teaspoon black pepper. Simmer for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the flavors are well combined.

7 **Combine pasta and sauce**

Add the cooked mostaccioli to the sauce mixture and toss until the pasta is evenly coated.

8 **Layer the dish**

Transfer half of the pasta mixture to the prepared baking dish and spread evenly. Sprinkle with 1 cup mozzarella cheese and 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese.

9 Top with remaining pasta mixture and sprinkle with remaining 1 cup mozzarella cheese and 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese.

10 **Bake until golden**

Bake for 20-25 minutes, until the cheese is bubbling and golden brown on top.

11 Let rest for 5 minutes before serving to allow the cheese to set slightly.

## Tips

Cook the mostaccioli pasta 1-2 minutes less than package directions since it will continue cooking in the oven. This prevents mushy pasta in the final dish.

Let the assembled dish rest for 5-10 minutes after removing from the oven. This allows the sauce to thicken and makes serving much easier.

Use a combination of mozzarella and Parmesan cheeses for the best flavor and melting properties. Fresh mozzarella can make the dish watery, so stick with low-moisture varieties.

Brown the Italian sausage thoroughly to develop deep flavor, and don't forget to drain excess fat before adding the sauce to prevent greasiness.

Layer a thin coating of sauce on the bottom of your baking dish to prevent pasta from sticking and ensure even cooking throughout.

Cover the dish with foil for the first 15 minutes of baking to prevent the top from browning too quickly, then remove for the final 10 minutes.

For extra flavor, add a splash of red wine to the sauce while it simmers, or incorporate fresh herbs like basil and oregano in the final minutes of cooking.

Make sure your baking dish is properly greased and large enough to prevent overflow. A 9x13-inch dish works perfectly for this recipe serving 8 people.