Nutmeg Notebook

VEGAN PENNE PASTA BAKE

Ingredients:

- 9 ounce pasta, whole wheat, gluten free or legume pasta
- 1 cup red onion, diced
- 8 ounces baby Bella mushrooms, diced or sliced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 2 cups greens, finely chopped – spinach or kale
- 1 tablespoon Italian Herbs
- 32 ounces marinara, store bought or my Classic Marinara recipe (see Editor's Note)
- 1 15 ounce can of cooked lentils, or 1 3/4 cup cooked lentils or 1 15-oz can white beans, drained

Garnishes

- fresh basil, thinly sliced
- EASY VEGAN FAUX PARMESAN (next column)
- Kalamata olives, sliced

Instructions:

- Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain and set aside.
- While pasta is cooking, using a deep skillet over a medium heat, sauté onions, mushrooms, bell pepper and garlic in water, wine, or veg broth. Stir frequently and add water as needed to prevent sticking.
- When onions are translucent and peppers, mushrooms and garlic are cooked add finely chopped greens and stir to combine, add Italian seasoning, marinara, rinsed cooked and drained lentils, or cooked drained white beans combine, and add Italian seasoning. Simmer until heated through, add drained cooked pasta, stir until pasta is well incorporated.
- When everything is hot remove from heat. It is ready to serve hot from the pot or you can pour it into a baking dish, sprinkle with faux parmesan cover and bake at 350 degrees for 20-30 minutes. Remove from oven, uncover and add some fresh basil and sliced Kalamata olives. Offer some red pepper flakes to sprinkle on top for those who like a little extra spice.

Editor's Note: It can be hard to find oil-free and completely plant-based marinara and may be pricey when you find it. You can look for the recipe on the Nutmeg site, or use the RLMI recipe (next column).

RLMI PASTA SAUCE

28 oz can tomato sauce or crushed tomatoes (preferably low-salt or salt free)
1/2 tsp onion powder or garlic powder
Chopped onion and garlic (optional)

Heat through.* *For this recipe, no need to add the onions and garlic or to heat the sauce through, as the ingredients and technique of the overall recipe provide that.

EASY VEGAN FAUX PARMESAN

- 3/4 cup blanched almonds, or cashews, Brazil nuts or rolled oats
- 1/4 cup hemp seeds
- 1/4 cup nutritional yeast
- 1/4 tsp garlic powder
- 1/4 tsp salt or salt substitute, to taste

Instructions:

- Place all ingredients in a mini food processor and process until ground into a crumbly texture, being careful to not over process or you will end up with a paste. You want it to be granular.
- Store in a glass container in the refrigerator. It should keep 3-4 weeks in the refrigerator.

<u>Optional Substitutions:</u>
Red onion – white onion
Red bell pepper – any color of bell pepper
Lentils – white beans
Mushrooms – eggplant or zucchini
Pasta – gluten free, legume based or whole wheat
Spinach – kale or your favorite dark leafy greens



Tami and Tom of **Nutmeg Notebook** made the journey to whole-food plant-based and want to help others on their way. All recipes are oil-free.

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