

THE PASTA EDIT / VOL. 001

Pepperoni Pasta Bake

50 MIN • 6 SERVINGS • FREE

THE INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb penne
- 1 jar (24 oz) of your favorite marinara or tomato pasta sauce
- ½ cup heavy cream (optional, for a softer sauce)
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp onion powder
- 2 cups shredded low-moisture mozzarella, divided
- ½ cup grated Parmesan
- 4 oz sliced pepperoni
- 5 slices bacon, cooked crisp and chopped
- 1 tbsp butter or oil, for the baking dish
- Fresh parsley or basil, optional

THE METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Grease a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Cook bacon until crisp and drain.
2. Boil penne in salted water for 2 minutes less than the package's al dente time; drain.
3. In a large bowl, combine marinara, cream if using, Italian seasoning, garlic powder, and onion powder. Toss with penne, half the pepperoni, bacon, 1 cup mozzarella, and half the Parmesan.
4. Spread in the baking dish. Top with remaining mozzarella, Parmesan, and pepperoni.
5. Cover loosely with foil and bake 15 minutes. Uncover and bake another 10–15 minutes until bubbling and the center reaches 165°F. For extra browning, broil briefly while watching closely.
6. Rest 5–10 minutes before serving. Finish with parsley or basil if you like.

KITCHEN NOTE — A favorite jarred marinara keeps this simple. If the cheese browns too quickly, loosely cover with foil until the center is hot, then let the bake rest before serving.