

TASTE WITHOUT WASTE

Lentil and Vegetable Pasta Casserole

Serves 6-8

Ingredients

2 tbsp sunflower oil
1 large onion, finely chopped
1 large carrot, cut into 0.5cm thick triangles
75g zucchini (approximately 1/3), cut into 1 cm dice
150g field mushrooms (about 2), cut into 1 cm dice
1 ½ cups other vegetables, cut into rough 1cm dice. Capsicum, green beans, sweet potato, pumpkin, broccoli, sweet corn are all great options.
½ tsp dried oregano
500ml jar of good quality tomato pasta sauce
1/3 cup red lentils, rinsed well
400g can kidney beans, drained and rinsed (optional)
200g pasta (penne or small shells work best)
Olive oil for drizzling

Cheese Sauce:

1 x 440g can evaporated milk (I used Nestle's 'light and creamy')
1 tbsp plus 1 tsp cornflour
½ cup finely grated cheddar cheese
Sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper

Method

Preheat the oven to 180C. Grease a 30x20cm (or similar size) ovenproof baking dish.

Set a large saucepan over a medium heat and add the sunflower oil. When shimmering, throw in the onion and cook for 8 minutes or until soft and golden, stirring every so often. Add the carrot, zucchini, mushrooms, 1 ½ cups of other vegetables, oregano, tomato sauce, lentils and kidney beans. Cover and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 20 minutes or until the vegetables and lentils are tender. Stir very regularly as the lentils are prone to stick to the bottom of the pot and burn!

Meanwhile, bring a separate pot of salted water to the boil. Cook the pasta according to packet instructions until just al dente and drain. Transfer to a large bowl, drizzle with a little olive and stir well to prevent the individual pieces from sticking to each other.

Once the tomato sauce is cooked, pour over the pasta and set aside.

Cheese Sauce:

To make the cheese sauce, whisk 80ml of the evaporated milk with the cornflour in a small bowl or jug to make a smooth paste. Pour the rest of the milk into a small saucepan and bring to the boil. Once boiling, remove from the heat and gradually add the cornflour paste, whisking constantly. Return to a low heat and stir constantly until the sauce has thickened. Remove from the heat once again and stir through ½ of the grated cheese.

Pour half of the cheese sauce over the pasta mixture and stir well to combine. Transfer the pasta mixture to the prepared baking dish and pour over the remaining cheese sauce. Spread evenly with a plastic spatula. Sprinkle with the remaining cheese and bake for 20 minutes or until light golden brown on top.

Serve with a salad or baked or steamed vegetables. Can be eaten warm or cold.

Will keep for 2-3 days in the refrigerator.

*Source: Significantly adapted from the Australian Institute of Sport 'Survival of the Fittest' cookbook.
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