A Recipe For:

 

# **Baked Ziti**

**From the Kitchen of:** Michelle

**Servings:** 4

**Prep Time:** 10 minutes **Bake Time:** 40 minutes **Bake Temp:** 400

**Ingredients:**

* 1 lb dried ziti pasta
* Kosher salt
* 3 ½ cups Quick Tomato Sauce, recipe follows
* 1 lb fresh mozzarella, half cut into ½ inch cubes and half thinly sliced
* ¾ cups freshly grated Parmesan, divided
* ½ teas freshly ground black pepper
* Pinch red pepper flakes

**Quick Tomato Sauce:**

* 2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
* 1 lb sweet and/or spicy Italian sausages, casing removed and crumbled.
* ¼ medium onion, diced (about 3 tablespoons)
* 3 cloves garlic, chopped
* 3 ½ cups whole, peeled, canned tomatoes in puree (one 28 oz can) roughly chopped
* Sprig fresh thyme
* Sprig fresh basil
* 2 teas Kosher salt
* Freshly ground black pepper

**Instructions:**

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
2. Bring a large pot of water to a boil, salt generously and boil the pasta until el dente, tender but still slightly firm. Drain.
3. Toss the cooked pasta with the marinera sauce, cubed mozzarella, half the Parmesan cheese, black pepper and pepper flakes. Transfer the pasta to an oiled 9x13 inch baking dish. Cover the top of the pasta with the sliced mozzarella and sprinkle with the remain Parmesan. Bake until lightly browned and hot, about 30 minutes. Serve immediately.

**Quick Tomato Sauce:**

1. Heat the oil in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Cook the sausage until beginning to brown, about 3 minutes. Add the onion and garlic, stirring, until lightly browned, about 3 minutes more. Add the tomatoes and the herb sprigs and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer, covered, for 10 minutes.
2. Remove and discard the herb sprigs. Stir in the salt and season with pepper, to tase. Use now or store covered in the refrigerator for up to 3 days, or freeze for up to 2 months.