



THOUGHTFUL COOKING WITH TINA

Veggie Pastitsio with Tofu Bechamel (Pulses-free)

SERVES 6 TO 8 • 2 HRS

A vegetarian pastitsio with silken tofu béchamel and a rich, umami-packed vegetable sauce — creamy, comforting, high in protein and pulses-free.

INGREDIENTS

PASTA LAYER

500g wholewheat penne, cooked and cooled
A drizzle of extra virgin olive oil for greasing
2 tbsp of parsley, finely chopped
20g Parmesan over the pasta layer

VEGETABLE SAUCE

10g dried porcini mushrooms
300ml boiling water
2 tbsp sunflower seeds
3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil, plus ½ tbsp for drizzling
1/2 white onion
2 cloves of garlic, minced
1 tbsp tomato paste
1 carrot (approx. 180g)
1 small beetroot (approx. 70g)
200g canned tomatoes
60g tahini (¼ cup, sesame seed paste)
200g baby chestnut mushrooms
1 tbsp of lemon juice
Zest of one lemon
1 tsp smoked paprika
1 tsp sea salt, or to taste
1 tsp black pepper

TOFU BECHAMEL

600g organic silken tofu
400g almond milk
30g arrowroot starch (for thickening)
1 organic egg
40g grated Parmesan (or 2 tbsp nutritional yeast for a non-dairy alternative)
½ tsp nutmeg powder
1 tsp black pepper
½ tsp sea salt, or to taste

METHOD

1. Cook the wholewheat pasta according to the packet instructions. Drain, rinse under cool water, and set aside.
2. Grease a large 9x13 inch (23x33 cm) baking dish with a drizzle of olive oil and spread the cooked pasta evenly in the dish. Sprinkle with 20g of Parmesan or a vegan alternative. Set aside to cool down.
3. Rehydrate the dried porcini mushrooms by soaking them in warm water. At the same time, soak the sunflower seeds in warm water to soften them.
4. In a large pan, heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil and sauté the finely chopped onion and minced garlic over medium heat until softened and fragrant.
5. Add the grated carrot and beet to the pan and stir well. Pour in the vegetable stock, cover, and let simmer for about 20 minutes until the vegetables soften but still have a bite.
6. While the vegetables are cooking, blend the rehydrated porcini mushrooms, drained sunflower seeds, fresh mushrooms, tahini, and 1 tablespoon of olive oil into a thick paste.
7. Stir the blended mushroom mixture into the pan with the vegetables. Add the canned tomatoes, tomato paste, apple cider vinegar, paprika, cinnamon stick, salt, and black pepper. Stir well and let it cook half-covered for another 10–15 minutes until thickened. Remove the cinnamon stick and set the sauce aside.
8. In a blender, combine the silken tofu, almond milk, arrowroot starch, grated Parmesan (or vegan alternative), nutmeg, black pepper, and sea salt. Blend until smooth.
9. Pour the blended béchamel mixture into a saucepan over low heat. Stir continuously until it begins to thicken.
10. Whisk one whole egg (or two egg yolks for a richer texture) and slowly mix it into the béchamel, stirring well to combine and ensure a smooth consistency.

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TOPPING

11. Pour the vegetable sauce over the pasta, spreading it evenly. Then, gently pour the thickened béchamel over the top, smoothing it out with a spatula.
12. Sprinkle the remaining 40g of Parmesan or a vegan alternative over the top.
13. Bake in a preheated oven at 180°C (350°F) for about 30–35 minutes, or until the top is golden and set.
14. Let it rest for 10 minutes before slicing and serving.

ALLERGENS Sesame (Tahini) · Soy (Tofu) · Dairy (Parmesan) · Wheat (Pasta) · Eggs

PER SERVING · estimated

~435 kcal · Protein ~14g · Fat ~15.4g · Carbs ~57g · Fibre ~4.6g