

# Ground Beef and Pasta Casserole

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Hands-on Time

45 Mins

Total Time

45 Mins

Yield

Serves 6 (serving size: 1 1/2 cups)

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By MAUREEN CALLAHAN March 2016

## COOKING LIGHT

This casserole is perfect for your busy week when getting in and out of the kitchen needs to be a snap. With very simple prep work, it will become a weeknight staple in your household.

## Ingredients

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2 small onions, peeled and quartered

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2 large carrots, peeled and cut into 3-inch pieces

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1 tablespoon olive oil

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4 garlic cloves, minced

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1 tablespoon dried Italian seasoning

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1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper

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1/2 teaspoon salt, divided

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1 pound extra-lean ground sirloin

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3 1/2 cups unsalted chicken stock

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6 tablespoons sliced fresh basil, divided

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2 tablespoons unsalted tomato paste

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1 tablespoon red wine vinegar

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12 ounces uncooked whole-wheat chioccioline or rigatoni (such as Bionaturae)

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1 (26.46-ounce) carton strained tomatoes (such as Pomì)

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## How to Make It

**Step 1** Place onions in a food processor; pulse until finely chopped. Add carrots; pulse until finely chopped.

**Step 2** Preheat oven to 350°.

**Step 3** Heat a large high-sided sauté pan over medium heat. Add oil to pan; swirl to coat. Add onion mixture; cook 4 minutes. Add garlic; cook 2 minutes. Add Italian seasoning, red pepper, and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Add beef; cook 5 minutes. Stir in stock, 4 tablespoons basil, tomato paste, vinegar, pasta, and tomatoes. Bring mixture to a boil; cook 13 minutes or until pasta is almost done, stirring frequently. Stir in remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt.

**Step 4** Arrange mozzarella over pasta mixture. Sprinkle with Parmigiano-Reggiano; bake at 350° for 15 minutes or until pasta is done. Sprinkle with remaining 2 tablespoons basil.

4 ounces fresh mozzarella cheese, cut  
into 1/8-inch-thick slices

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1 ounce Parmigiano-Reggiano  
cheese, grated (about 1/4 cup)

### **Nutritional Information**

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- Calories 469, • Fat 12.7g,
- Saturated Fat 5.2g, • Monounsaturated Fat 3.4g,
- Polyunsaturated Fat 0.7g, • Protein 32g,
- Carbohydrate 57g, • Fiber 8g,
- Cholesterol 58mg, • Iron 4mg,
- Sodium 480mg, • Calcium 209mg,
- Sugars 11g, • Estimated added sugars 0g.

### **Mledward**

November 06, 2017

The recipe calls for red pepper.

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# Hearty and Tasty

### **jspicest**

February 23, 2016

Family really enjoyed this recipe.....I did make a number of minor substitutions though....didn't use low/no salt items, used dried basil instead of fresh (1/3 of what was called for), tomato sauce in place of the strained tomatoes (they were ridiculously expensive). Liked the processing of the carrot and onion - allowed me to "hide" veggies (always good). Found that the finished product still lacked a little salt, and the serving size was at least 2 cups per person which was more than most of us could eat! Will definitely make again.

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**AuntieM**

August 29, 2017

How can you give this 5 stars when you changed some of the important items. Big difference between fresh and dried basil. And tomato sauce and strained tomatoes. I wish people would rate the ORIGINAL recipe and not their version.

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## It's a keeper

**hannahsgirl**

June 01, 2016

Minor changes. Used 28oz can of petite diced tomatoes, doubled the garlic, and used 1/4 lb more beef That's it. Not sure why everyone added more salt. I simply seasoned the onion garlic mixture before adding the beef.

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## Hearty and OK

**DecaturAla**

May 25, 2016

I added a few things based off of Diane's review. I added more salt, crushed red pepper, dried basil (along with the recommended fresh basil) - It was still lacking. It definitely made a whole lot. Waaaaaay too much for just me and one other. It didn't taste bad, it just wasn't great.

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## Very Good

**JMC75244**

August 17, 2016

This was just a really good, hearty meal that the whole family enjoyed. I used a 28 oz can of petite diced tomatoes instead of the strained and added just a bit more garlic. Will definitely make again.

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**Meh**

**lulubelle3091**

August 30, 2016

Other reviewers were correct when they said it needs more salt. It's basically incredibly bland. I won't be putting this one in my files.

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**Why change the recipe and then complain it was just OK.. not great?**

**Diane**

February 12, 2017

I am always surprised when someone makes changes, in some cases - significant changes, and then complains the outcome was OK, not great. Really? Why is that a surprise to you? You didn't make the recipe -- you made your version of it. That's ok, but I would suggest that the first time you make the recipe as directed - then the next time, tweak it to your personal preference. That is the only way to know what you want changed. This is an Italian based (seasoned) recipe. Some added a Mexican flare to it with Red Pepper and wondered why it didn't work combining the two distinctly different flavors and seasoning ??? No duh.

Chicken broth is always a good additive (especially instead of just water) It does normally does not take away from other seasoning flavors. While you might think, doesn't get it give you a 'chicken flavor' - the answer is no. When more liquid is needed -- chicken broth give you "more" than water which will do nothing but" water down a recipe." Chicken broth doesn't change the underling taste. Beef broth might make this more beefy tasting and but then mask the Italian Seasonings - causing you to add more seasoning to achieve the Italian taste. You might be surprised, tomatoes are acidity. To cut that acid taste, instead of adding more salt, try just a touch of sugar. It cuts the acid bite and adds just a very slight sweet taste which compliments the other ingredients. I use brown sugar in my Spaghetti sauce to create a deep rich flavor and I am always asked - what did you do to this sauce - Its great? Brown sugar it the secret ingredient.

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## Kids Loved It

**loveoursons**

August 31, 2017

My kids loved this and I loved sneaking in some vegetables. My grocery store didn't have the carton of tomatoes so I just used a large can of tomatoes and cut them. I also used the whole box of pasta. My kids are all taking the leftovers for lunch today. Will definitely make again!

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## Hearty and Tasty II

**gillmans**

February 25, 2016

Agree with the first reviewer. This was really good! Get out your big pot...this makes a lot. We used 8oz of beef crumble substitute in place of the sirloin to make this vegetarian. And since we used low-sodium veggie broth instead of unsalted, I reduced the salt to 1/4 tsp.

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