



Makes 8 cups
Preparation Time: 15 minutes
Cook Time: 1 hours

INGREDIENTS:

1 14.5-oz. can no-salt-added
diced tomatoes

¾ cup jarred roasted red
peppers, drained

¾ cup chopped onion

½ cup raw cashews, soaked (see
tip, recipe intro)

3 tablespoons nutritional yeast

2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

4 cloves garlic, minced

2 teaspoons dried Italian
seasoning

1½ teaspoon sea salt

½ teaspoon freshly ground black
pepper

12 oz. dried whole grain rotini or
penne pasta

1 9- to 10-oz. eggplant, trimmed,
peeled, and cut into 1-inch
pieces (about 3 cups)

8 oz. sliced fresh cremini or
button mushrooms

½ cup chopped fresh basil
(optional)

Mediterranean Pasta Bake with Mushrooms and Eggplant

This scrumptious Mediterranean pasta bake combines the flavor-melding magic of **casseroles** with the convenience of pasta, and it requires just 20 minutes of active prep time. The quick blender sauce tastes fresher than anything out of a jar, and it comes together in a jiffy. There's no need to turn on the stovetop with this recipe—throw the dried pasta, sauce, mushrooms, and **eggplant** into a baking dish with some water, then cover with foil and bake. Be sure to seal the foil tightly around the edges so the pasta cooks fully and the casserole stays saucy. This hunger-busting pasta bake tastes great with a garden salad and a chunk of whole grain bread.

Tips

Cashews: Soak cashews in enough very hot water to cover for 15 minutes; drain and rinse.

Gluten-free version: To make this gluten-free, simply opt for a gluten-free variety of whole grain pasta.

For more inspiration, check out these tasty ideas:

- [Vegan Pastitsio with Lentils \(Greek Lasagna\)](#)
- [Creamy Baked Fettuccine with Kale \(new recipe, add link\)](#)
- [Sweet Potato Lasagna](#)

By Laura Marzen, RD, LD

- 1 For sauce, in a blender combine the first 10 ingredients (through black pepper). Cover and blend until very smooth, scraping sides as needed.
- 2 Preheat oven to 425°F. In a very large bowl combine sauce with 2½ cups water. Add pasta, eggplant, and mushrooms; stir until well combined, making sure all pasta is coated with sauce. Spoon pasta mixture into a 3-quart rectangular baking dish, spreading evenly. Cover tightly with foil.
- 3 Bake 45 to 55 minutes or until pasta is tender. Carefully loosen foil and let stand 5 to 10 minutes before serving. Sprinkle servings with basil (if using).