



Italian Three-cheese Chicken Cacciatore

*This recipe is as much about chicken as it is about pasta. Both play an equal role in its deliciousness! This makes a huge amount and is great if you are having guests over or just for a nice family dinner with tons of leftovers for another night. If you prefer dark meat, you can use bone-in or boneless thighs. You can assemble the whole thing ahead of time, cover with foil, and bake later. Baking time would be a bit more if you do that, though. **I wouldn't add any strongly flavored herbs like basil or oregano as they tend to overpower the lovely combined flavors of the cheeses, olive oil, wine and balsamic vinegar.***

- 1 lb. dried bow-tie pasta (Farfalle)
- 3 T. Extra-Virgin olive oil
- 2 lb. skinless, boneless, chicken breast halves, cut crosswise into 1/4-inch-wide strips (4 breast halves)
- 2 small or 1 med. large yellow onion, sliced
- 2 medium green bell peppers, cut in half lengthwise and thinly sliced
- 2 large cloves garlic, minced
- 1 can (14 1/2 ounces) stewed or diced tomatoes, or use halved cherry tomatoes in season
- 1/4 C. tomato paste
- 1/4 C. red wine
- 1/3 C. balsamic vinegar
- 1 container (15 oz.) ricotta cheese
- 1/2 C. grated Asiago or Romano cheese
- 2 C. (8 oz.) shredded mozzarella cheese
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 1 T. dried parsley (or 1/4 C. fresh, minced)
- 1 T. capers
- 1 t. salt
- 1/2 t. freshly ground black pepper

Bring 3 quarts water to boil in 6- to 8-quart pot over high heat. Stir in pasta and return to boil. Boil, stirring occasionally, until pasta is tender, 9-10 minutes. Drain and set aside until ready to use. Preheat oven to 350°F.

Heat oil in large (12-to 14-inch) cast-iron skillet over medium-heat for 1 minute. Season chicken with salt and pepper and brown it, flipping occasionally, for 6 minutes or until no longer pink. Remove chicken and reserve until ready to use.

In same skillet, cook onion, garlic, and bell peppers over medium heat, scraping up browned chicken bits and stirring occasionally, until onions and peppers are tender, about 8 minutes.

In a bowl, mix well tomatoes, tomato paste, red wine, and balsamic vinegar and add to onion and pepper mixture over medium heat. When bubbling, add reserved chicken, and cook, stirring, for 3 minutes.

Remove skillet from heat and stir in reserved pasta until distributed.

Stir together ricotta cheese, Asiago cheese, mozzarella cheese, eggs, parsley, salt, and pepper in medium bowl until well-blended.

Spread ricotta mixture over skillet contents in even layer. Bake in preheated oven 30 to 35 minutes or until heated through. Serve directly from skillet.

Makes 6-8 servings.