

## **Basic pasta/pizza sauce**

1 x tin chopped tomatoes

1 onion, diced

1/2 stick celery, finely chopped

1 carrot, peeled and diced

2 cloves garlic, crushed

1/2 tsp brown sugar

2 tbsp fresh basil, oregano or marjoram

Salt & black pepper

Pour 2 tbsp oil into a heavy based medium sized pan. Add the onion, celery and carrot. Sauté for a few minutes before adding the garlic. Cook for two minutes, stirring all the time so the garlic doesn't burn. Add the chopped tomatoes and brown sugar. Season with salt and black pepper. Simmer till the vegetables are cooked, about ten minutes. Remove from the heat and leave to cool slightly. Add the basil leaves to the pan and blitz everything till smooth with a hand held blender or use a food processor. Set aside.

## **Rigatoni pasta bake**

Serves 6

For the pasta:

1 onion, diced

4 cloves garlic, crushed

2 tbsp olive oil

380g minced beef or sweet Italian style sausages, casings removed

250g mozzarella cheese, torn into bite size pieces

50g grated Coolea cheese

Salt & black pepper

1 tbsp chopped herbs (oregano or basil)

2 x 500g cartons of tomato passata

1 tsp sugar

500g dried rigatoni pasta

Fresh basil or oregano

Preheat the oven to 180C.

Heat 2 tbsp olive oil in a large pan, add the onion and saute till soft. Add the garlic and stir for a minute till fragrant. Add the beef mince, season with salt and pepper. Cook over a high heat till the beef is browned well, about 8 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat.

Cook the pasta in a pan of boiling salted water till just al dente. Drain in a colander. Add the pasta to the pot of beef and stir to combine. Add the herbs, passata and a tsp of sugar. Stir well to combine. Fold in half of the mozzarella.

Transfer the pasta to a large 9x13" oven safe dish. Sprinkle the top with the remaining cheeses. Bake until golden and bubbling for 30 minutes.

## **Creamy Leek & Dijon Orzo with chicken**

Serves 4

4 x free range chicken filets

2 tbsp olive oil

Salt

Black pepper

2 tbsp butter

2 leek, washed, trimmed and finely sliced

300g orzo pasta

700ml stock (or water & 1 stock cube)

1 tsp dijon mustard

3 tbsp creamy Greek yogurt or creme fraiche

2 tsp finely chopped thyme or 1 tsp dried thyme

40g finely grated parmesan

To serve: A green salad or broccoli

Heat the oil in a frying pan. Flatten out the chicken filets slightly so they're all the same thickness and will cook evenly. Lay them in the pan and season with a little salt. Leave to cook undisturbed for 5 minutes before turning over and cooking fully on the other side. Set aside and keep warm.

Meanwhile, melt the butter in a large heavy based pan. Add the sliced leeks and stir. Place the lid on, lower the heat and leave to saute gently After 5 minutes add the orzo and stir to coat the pasta in the buttery leeks. Add the stock and dijon mustard and 1 tsp of the thyme.

Increase the heat and simmer till the orzo is just cooked, 10-12 minutes. Stir in the yogurt or creme fraiche, the remaining thyme and half of the parmesan. Taste for seasoning, adding extra salt or black pepper if it needs it. Divide the orzo between

four bowls, top with a sliced chicken fillet, scatter with the remaining parsley and drizzle with some good olive oil.

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13: Recipe for a creamier dish now?

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