

## Baked Penne with Meatballs



### Ingredients:

- 4 cups tomato puree
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 pound prepared Italian-style meatballs
- 1 cup pancetta, coarsely chopped
- 1 cup reduced fat ricotta cheese
- 1 cup fresh mozzarella pearls or bocconcini, cubed
- 1 cup Parmesan, shredded
- 1/2 cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 1/2 cup fresh basil, chopped
- 1 package penne pasta
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

### Directions:

- 1) Heat the olive oil in a large saucepan and cook the garlic and pancetta until crisp.
- 2) Stir in the tomato puree, parsley, and basil, and season with salt and pepper. Bring the sauce to a boil and then reduce the heat and let it simmer for 20 minutes until the sauce has thickened.
- 3) Cook the pasta according to al dente package directions. Drain the pasta, reserving 1 cup of the pasta water.
- 4) Pre-heat your oven to 375 degrees.
- 5) Return the pasta to the pot and stir in the pasta sauce, meatballs, 1/2 cup of the Parmesan, and all of the ricotta and mozzarella cheeses. Add some of the reserved pasta water if the consistency seems dry.
- 6) Transfer the mixture into an oven-proof baking dish and sprinkle the remaining 1/2 cup of the Parmesan cheese on top.
- 7) Bake the pasta in the oven for 20 to 30 minutes until the top is golden and the cheeses are bubbly. Serve hot.