

Spicy Tuna Bake

- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 carrots, grated
- 2 celery sticks, finely diced
- 2 leeks, halved lengthways, then finely sliced
- 1 red pepper, finely diced
- 3 cloves of garlic, grated
- 1 red birds eye chilli, chopped (optional)
- 1 tbsp. paprika
- 1/2 tsp. smoked paprika
- 1/2 tsp chilli powder
- 2 tbsp. red pesto
- 1 lemon
- 2 tins of tuna, or approx. 250g
- 400ml tin of chopped tomatoes
- 15g flat leaf parsley, chopped
- 425g pasta of choice, I used rigatoni (empty the dry pasta into the oven dish you will use make sure you get a good two layers covering the base, this will be the pasta you need.)
- Cheese topping
- 25g butter
- 1 heap tbsp. plain flour
- 300ml milk
- 125g mozzarella
- 150g cheese, grated, I used red Leicester
- Optional basil leaves
- Oven dish, mine measured 12 x 8"

Cook the pasta al dente in salted water. Set aside.

Pre-heat the oven to 200 degrees.

Heat the oil and add carrots, celery, leeks, and pepper. Cook on low until soft.

Add the garlic and fresh chilli, if using. Mix well.

Add both paprikas, chilli powder, pesto then half of the lemon zest and the juice. I used the full lemon for juice as I like it to be very lemony. Add half, taste then decide.

Add the tuna and season with salt and pepper. Pour the tomatoes in and add the parsley, stir it all together. Let this cook for 10 minutes. Turn off the heat and set aside.

For the cheese topping melt the butter in a non-stick pan, then whisk in the flour to make a roux. Add a little milk and keep whisking to make sure you have no lumps, then pour in the rest of the milk. Keep the heat on medium and let the sauce thicken slightly before adding 3/4 of the mozzarella and half of the grated cheese. Stir this and turn off once cheese is melted.

Mix the pasta with the tuna so it is well combined and empty into the oven dish. Pour the cheese sauce over this and then arrange the rest of the mozzarella in small pieces on top, and evenly scatter the rest of the cheese. I also topped mine with a few basil leaves. Crack some pepper over the top and place into the oven for around 25 minutes, or until it is bubbling, and the cheese is nice and golden.

Allow to stand for a few minutes before serving.