

Creamy Roasted Vegetable & White Bean Fusilli Casserole



Serves 4–6

Ingredients:

- 2½ cups dry 100% whole grain fusilli
- 1 medium onion, diced (about 1½ cups)
- 1 medium zucchini, diced (about 1½ cups)
 - Peeled will have a better mouth feel
 - Unpeeled will have more nutrients
- 1 red bell pepper, diced (about 1½ cups)
- 1 medium eggplant, diced (about 2 cups)
 - Peeled will have a better mouth feel
 - Unpeeled will have more nutrients
- 4 cloves garlic, minced

- 1 (15 oz) can white beans, drained and rinsed

Tomato Sauce

- 1 (14–15 oz) can crushed tomatoes
 - Or use 3 blended tomatoes
- 1 tbsp tomato paste (optional)

Cashew Cream Cheese

- ½ cup raw cashews (soaked for 2 hours or boiled for 5 minutes)
- ½ cup water
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 tbsp nutritional yeast (optional)
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp garlic powder

Seasonings

- 1 tbsp Italian seasoning
 - Or combine dried 1½ tsp oregano, 1 tsp basil, ½ tsp thyme
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- ½ tsp red pepper flakes (optional)
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- ½ tsp black pepper

Topping

- ⅓ cup grated Parmesan (slightly more saturated fat)
 - Or drizzle with extra cashew sauce
- 1 tbsp olive oil

1. **Roast the Vegetables:** Preheat oven to 425°F. In a large bowl, toss 1½ cups diced onion, 1½ cups diced zucchini, 1½ cups diced red bell pepper, and 2 cups diced eggplant with 1 tbsp olive oil, ½ tsp kosher salt, and ¼ tsp black pepper. Spread in a single layer on a baking sheet and roast for 25 minutes (stirring at 15 minutes) until tender and slightly browned.



2. **Cook the Pasta:** Boil a large pot of water with 1 tbsp salt. Cook 2½ cups dry fusilli for 1 minute less than package directions. Drain, reserving ½ cup pasta water, and set aside.



3. **Make the Cashew Cream:** Blend the soaked cashews, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water, 1 tbsp lemon juice, 2 tbsp nutritional yeast, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp garlic powder until smooth. Set aside.



4. **Make the Sauce:** Heat a large pot over medium. Sauté 4 cloves minced garlic for 30 seconds. Stir in 1 can crushed tomatoes, 1 tbsp tomato paste, seasonings (1½ tsp oregano, 1 tsp basil, ½ tsp thyme, 1 tsp smoked paprika, ½ tsp red pepper flakes, ½ tsp salt, ¼ tsp pepper) and optional balsamic vinegar. Simmer 5–10 minutes, then stir in white beans and roasted vegetables.



5. **Combine & Bake:** Add cooked pasta and cashew cream to the pot. Stir until coated, adding reserved pasta water if too thick. Transfer to a lightly oiled 9x9 dish, sprinkle with ⅓ cup Parmesan or extra sauce, and bake at 375°F for 20–25 minutes. Broil for 2–3 minutes for extra browning. The goal is browned edges and a well-done but softer interior.
6. **Rest & Serve:** Let rest for 10 minutes. Garnish with 2 tbsp each of chopped parsley and basil before serving warm.

