



READ

Read, Eat, And Drink

Featuring

End of Story

by

A. J. Finn

Pasta 'ncasciata

Dan Mallory aka A. J. Finn, is not as obsessed with food as many of us authors are. I noted only two mentions in the novel, one being carrots and hummus in a vegetarian restaurant, and the other on page 105 when the family and their guest sits down to a Sicilian dinner prepared by housekeeper, Adelina. The choice between the two was easy.

Pasta 'ncasciata is a baked pasta dish that combines maccheroni pasta with ragu, fried eggplant, and caciocavallo cheese. The name "ncasciata" is derived from the Sicilian word for baked. The city of origin will dictate the ingredients and often call for chicken, but I prefer it with ground beef.

This pasta dish is made with just one layer differentiating it from most baked pasta dishes. It is considered Palermo's version. As always, I have included shortcuts to get you to your beverage quicker.

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. macaroni-style pasta
- 12 oz. ground beef
- 1 onion diced
- minced garlic
- ½ lb. caciocavallo cheese, cut into strips
- 4 oz. Parmigiano Reggiano, grated
- 1 eggplant
- ½ cup white wine
- basil leaves
- 1 cup tomato sauce
- salt
- extra-virgin olive oil
- Italian seasoning



Instructions:

- 1.) Wash then cut the eggplant into ½" cubes. Place them in a colander, sprinkle them with coarse salt, and let them sit for an hour to release excess water.
- 2.) Rinse the eggplant under running water and pat dry. Bake them in the oven with plenty of extra-virgin olive oil at 400 degrees Fahrenheit for 20 minutes. Turn and roast for 10 more minutes. The eggplant pieces should be caramelized and soft inside.
- 3.) While the eggplant is baking, chop the onion and sauté it for a few minutes in a pan with extra-virgin olive oil. Add garlic and cook a little longer. Add the ground beef seasoned with Italian seasoning, white wine, and cook for 10 minutes. Add tomato sauce to the beef, and cook for twenty minutes.
- 4.) Cook the pasta in boiling salted water and drain it once it's al dente. Transfer it to a baking dish, pour the sauce on top, and mix well. Add the eggplant, caciocavallo cheese, and basil, and top with the grated Parmigiano Reggiano. Place in the oven for 15 minutes and then serve with a salad and glass of Vermentino.
- 5.) Enjoy !



Tips

I don't care for eggplant skin, but you will need some on the cubes or they can turn mushy. Investigate other ways to cook eggplant if you do not like the skin.

Caciocavvlo cheese is not easy to find. Try a local cheese shop. I had to use provolone and it was not the same. It is worth the effort.

You can make this dish vegetarian by adding more eggplant instead of ground beef. It is also good with roasted red peppers and mushrooms.

Feel free to make your own tomato sauce, but Rao's Homemade Marina is tough to beat. I would also suggest a little extra tomato sauce.

Make sure you season well. It can be a little blah if you do not.

If you try this recipe, let me know what you think and send a pic to ChrisKneerAuthor.com. Once a month I will have a drawing for a great prize (well... maybe not great, but a prize 😊).

More recipes can be found at:

<https://chriskneerauthor.com/read-eat-and-drink/>