

Birria Baked Penne Pasta (<https://holdmygfbeer.com>)

A cheesy Mexican-Italian fusion bake with tender birria, roasted tomatoes, sweet corn, and crispy queso panela.

Ingredients

Pasta

- 1 package (400 g) gluten-free penne pasta
- Water and salt for cooking

Sauce

- 1/2 onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 cubanelle pepper, sliced
- 1 serrano pepper, sliced
- 4 plum tomatoes (2 diced, 2 sliced)
- Kernels from 1 ear corn (or 1 can, drained)
- About 1/2 pint leftover beef birria with sauce
- 1/4 cup chopped cilantro

Substitute: Shredded barbecue beef or pot roast plus hot sauce or red pepper flakes.

Cheese Topping (Optional)

- 1/2 block queso panela, cut into 1/2-inch slices
- 1 Tbsp avocado oil
- Badia Complete Seasoning

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C). Cook penne until al dente; drain.
2. Sauté onion, garlic, cubanelle, and serrano until softened.
3. Add diced tomatoes, corn, birria, and sauce. Simmer until thick and bubbly. Stir in cilantro.
4. Fold pasta into the sauce and transfer to a greased casserole dish.
5. Top with sliced tomatoes and optional Badia Complete Seasoning. Cover and bake 30–40 minutes.
6. Meanwhile, heat avocado oil in a non-stick skillet. Season queso panela and brown 2–3 minutes per side.
7. Top baked pasta with queso panela and garnish with torn basil.

About Queso Panela

Queso panela is a fresh Mexican cow's milk cheese with a mild, creamy flavor. It softens when heated without fully melting, making it ideal for pan-searing into a golden crust while staying tender inside.