



Italian Spaghetti Squash 'n Meatball Pizza

- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 1/2 cup chopped onions
- 1/2 cup chopped green pepper
- 1/3 cup Panko bread crumbs
- 6 ounces sweet Italian sausage (about 2 links)
- 1 (13.76 ounce) container Italian seasoned crushed tomatoes
- 2 cups cooked spaghetti squash, cooled (*see cook's note)
- 1 egg
- 1/2 teaspoon dried basil
- 1/4 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 3/4 cup shredded mozzarella or Italian blended cheeses

Place oil in hot 10 or 12 inch nonstick skillet. Add onions and green peppers; sauté until softened but not brown. Remove; set aside.

Meanwhile, in medium sized bowl, combine bread crumbs with ground Italian sausage. (if using links, remove sausage from casings; discard casings) Using level tablespoon of sausage mixture, form into small balls.

Remove; set aside onions and green peppers. Place sausage meatballs into hot skillet; cook on medium to medium high heat; browning all sides, about 10 minutes. Add crushed tomatoes and reserved onion peppers mixture. Cook until hot. Remove from heat; set aside.

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. Grease 14 inch pizza pan generously. Set aside.

Using paper towels, squeeze excess liquid from cooked spaghetti squash, leaving about 1-1 /2 cups well drained spaghetti squash.

In a large bowl, combine egg, basil, and oregano. Add well drained squash and 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese; stir to combine mixture. Press evenly into well greased 14 inch pizza pan forming pizza like crust. Bake in 450 preheated oven for about 15 minutes or until golden.

Remove from oven; spread the prepared pizza sauce and meatballs over pizza, leaving an edge of crust. Sprinkle top with additional shredded cheese. Place under hot broiler for a few minute to melt cheese.

Remove from oven; loosen edges of squash crust. Let rest about 5 minutes. Serve warm in pizza wedges. Serves: 4

Cook's Note: For a vegetarian pizza:

Eliminate the meatballs or replace with chopped mushrooms.

To prepare spaghetti squash in microwave oven:

Pierce the entire squash multiple times with a sharp knife. This is important so the squash doesn't break apart in the microwave. To cut squash easier in half. Place in 10 inch microwave safe dish with about 1/4

cup water in bottom; cook on high power for about 6 minutes; rotate squash once during cooking. With a fork or knife, test to see if it is soft enough to cut in half. If not, cook for 2 additional minutes.

Remove squash to cutting board. When cool enough to handle, cut lengthwise in half; remove; discard seeds. Place half of squash, flesh side down in baking dish with a little water in bottom; microwave on high power for 3 to 5 minutes until flesh is very soft. Remove to cutting board; cool. Cook remaining squash half following same procedure.

With a fork and spoon, scrape strands from the inside. They will look like spaghetti. Place in large bowl; discard any liquids.

About the Recipe: I know it's hard to believe but the squash does form a delicious crust. The filling is loaded with sweet Italian meatballs and vibrant fresh tasting pizza sauce. Yes – It's meatballs and veggie spaghetti!