

Baked orzo with sweet red peppers, olives and halloumi

This Mediterranean-inspired orzo bake, with sweet red peppers, Halkidiki olives, halloumi and salsa verde, makes for a stunning midweek meal as summer approaches

Baking orzo in the oven leaves you somewhere between a pasta bake and a risotto. Here, I've added punchy Tesco Finest pitted Halkidiki olives and sweet red peppers. The dish is finished with Tesco Finest halloumi, which is traditionally crafted in Cyprus and hand folded around a fresh mint leaf for an extra burst of flavour – its high melting point makes it ideal for baking. To cut through the salty cheese, I've added a zesty salsa verde.

Prep 15 min

Cook 45 min

Serves 4

2 Tesco Finest sweet pointed red peppers

3 tbsp Tesco Finest Sicilian extra virgin olive oil

1 onion, thinly sliced

2 garlic cloves, sliced

1/2 tsp chilli flakes

2 x 400g cans finely chopped tomatoes

100g Tesco Finest pitted Halkidiki olives, halved

300g Tesco Finest orzo

1 x 225g Tesco Finest halloumi, sliced

For the salsa verde

1/2 bunch parsley, plus extra to serve

1/2 bunch basil, plus extra to serve

2 tsp capers, drained

1/2 garlic clove

1 lemon, zest and juice

4 tbsp Tesco Finest Sicilian extra virgin olive oil

Place the peppers on a tray and grill under the highest setting for 15-20 minutes, turning halfway until blackened and blistered. Transfer the peppers

to a bowl and once cool, peel off their skins, scoop out the seeds and slice into strips.

Heat the oven to 180C (160C fan)/350F/ gas 4. On the hob, heat the oil in a wide, shallow ovenproof casserole dish. Add the onion with a pinch of salt and fry for 10-12 minutes or until softened. Tip in the garlic and chilli flakes and fry for 1 minute. Next add the tomatoes, olives and sliced peppers then the orzo and 300ml of water. Stir everything together and season to taste.

Nestle the sliced halloumi on top and bake in the oven for 20 minutes before checking. If the orzo is too al dente, return to the oven for another 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, put all the ingredients for the salsa verde into a food processor, season with salt and pepper and pulse until you have a chunky salsa. Season to taste.

Drizzle the salsa over the cooked orzo and finish with a good handful of herbs.