

Mexican Casserole

1 lb. wide noodles cooked al dente

Drain noodles and toss with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup melted butter

Cover bottom of 13 x 9 casserole dish with half of the noodles.

Combine: 1 8 oz. cream cheese

1 cup small curd cottage cheese

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup sour cream

Spread above mixture over the noodles in casserole dish

Top with remaining noodles.

Fry 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. ground chuck with a small chopped onion, drain.

Stir in 1 package taco seasoning packet into the beef.

Mix

Together: 1 15 oz. can chopped tomatoes with green chilies

1 29 oz. can chopped or petite diced tomatoes

1 16 oz. jar mild corn and black bean salsa

1 15 oz. can black beans (rinsed and drained)

2 cups frozen corn

Combine the beef with the other above ingredients and pour $\frac{1}{2}$ of mixture over the 2nd layer of noodles. Seal the baking dish tightly with foil. You can heat the above mixture in a large pan before covering the noodles to speed up baking time. You will have enough meat mixture to freeze for another casserole.

Beef broth may be added if needed.

Bake 350 degrees until noodles are fully cooked. Remove foil and spread 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 cups of shredded Mexican cheese over the top of the casserole. Return to oven long enough for the cheese to melt.

Kafta

1 lb ground beef
1 lb ground lamb*
1 Cup chopped parsley
1 Cup chopped onion
2 tsp salt
1/2 tsp pepper
1 tsp lemon pepper
1-1 1/2 tsp Syrian 7-spice*

Mix all together and divide into 8 equal portions, form into 8 patties or 8 logs, wrap tightly in saran wrap if freezing. These are best when grilled. I made meatballs for today's luncheon.

Hummus

1 -29 oz can of Cedar Chick Peas* (drained, save liquid)
2 tsp Tahini paste*
Juice from 1/2 lemon
1-2 cloves fresh garlic (must be fresh-old garlic makes it too hot)
Olive oil
Optional:
2 tsp Labneh* (a Middle Eastern spreadable cream/cheese/yogurt like product)

Directions:

Put tahini, lemon juice, garlic and mix in blender on high until it forms a paste (you may have to add some reserved liquid from chick peas to get the paste to form.)
Add remaining ingredients (and Labneh if using) and blend adding olive oil and reserved chick pea liquid until smooth add salt to taste.
Depending on the size of your blender you may have to make two batches and mix together in a bowl.

Enjoy! Lynn C.

*Available at Toledo Market: 3410 Dorr St., Toledo, OH 43607 (bulk spices available here too)
or Sidron Bakery and Market : 4625 W Bancroft St, Toledo, OH 43615 (Great restaurant next door)

Mexican Layered Casserole, recipe created by Christine Scarlett

Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Spray a 9"X13" glass pan with olive oil spray.

1# lean (grass-fed) ground beef, browned (can be done ahead)
15 oz. can of pinto or black beans, drained and rinsed
1 envelope of taco seasoning mix
1 1/4 C raw brown rice, cooked on stovetop, baked in oven, or in a rice cooker (this takes a little while, so it can be done ahead)
8-12 oz. (2-3 C) grated Mexican cheese blend (or cheddar)
1 small red or white onion, minced
Mexican oregano, to sprinkle on

(When sweet corn is in season, you could add a layer of cooked corn, cut off of the cobs.)

Possible optional garnishes: sour cream or plain Greek yogurt, salsa, guacamole, chopped tomatoes, sliced ripe olives, shredded lettuce, chopped cilantro, Mexican slaw, crushed tortilla chips

Combine browned ground beef, drained beans, taco seasoning, and water according to package instructions and heat through.

Layer cooked brown rice first, follow with meat-bean mixture. Top with grated cheese. Scattered minced onion on top. Sprinkle with Mexican oregano if you have it. Cover with foil and heat through in preheated oven. Time will vary based on whether you began with hot layers. If you layer this ahead and refrigerate (or freeze) warming time will be much longer.

If you have leftovers, it makes great taco or tostada filling. You can also steam some whole grain flour tortilla wraps for Chipotle knock-off burritos.

This is a high-protein, nutrient-dense dish. (It is not low in calories.). Great for potlucks or tail gates. I have served this to hungry teens and gifted it to new moms. It also makes a kind bereavement meal. This recipe also works well in soup kitchen situations.

Eggplant Pizzas

I make eggplant parmesan casserole style, usually two full casseroles at a time, and freeze one of the casseroles for a meal later on. Even so, I usually have leftovers that can carry me through a week with just one casserole. This is a quickie adaptation that makes a great hors oeuvre for potlucks. I listed the basic toppings, but the optional toppings are highly recommended. You may have your own favorite toppings to add to the list.

Ingredients:

- 1 One eggplant
- 2 Two eggs
- 3 Flour
- 4 Milk
- 5 Seasoned breadcrumbs
- 6 Vegetable or canola oil
- 7 Spaghetti sauce
- 8 Cheese (usually mozzarella or provolone)
- 9 Oregano
- 10 Optional Toppings:
 - a. Ground beef or sausage fried out, drained and combined with the Spaghetti sauce
 - b. Sliced mushrooms
 - c. Sliced onions
 - d. Sliced peppers
 - e. Ricotta cheese

Directions for Eggplant Patties (can be prepared ahead and refrigerated):

Combine the two egg yolks and whites with the flour and milk in a large bowl and stir. Add the flour and milk to result in a thick paste about 1/3 to 1/2 up the bowl. Stir to remove all lumps. Slice the eggplant crosswise in 1/2 inch thick slices. Discard ends. Submerge slices in batter mix to coat completely. Refrigerate until batter mix is at refrigerator temperature.

Heat the oil in shallow fry pan or deep fryer. Using tongues dredge the eggplant slices on both sides through the seasoned breadcrumbs and fry in batches not to overcrowd. Cook for about eight minutes, turning midway. Remove with tongues, draining oil and place on paper towel to absorb excess oil.

Directions for Finishing Eggplant Pizzas:

Arrange slices on large oven/microwave safe plate without overlap. Spoon on Spaghetti sauce to cover slices completely. Add optional toppings (Some can be precooked with Spaghetti sauce similar to meat). Cover with cheese. Sprinkle oregano on top. Bake or microwave until cheese begins to run. Serve hot.

Cheese CAKE

2 packages Graham Crackers

$\frac{1}{4}$ lb + 2 tbs melted oleo

1 Package Lemon Jello

1 cup Boiling water

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup sugar

1-8oz + $\frac{1}{2}$ of a 8oz pkg cream cheese

2 pkgs Dream whip

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar add to Graham cracker

Mix Jello + 1 cup hot water

together till dissolved

LET SET till cool

take cream cheese + $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

sugar + beat together then pour

Jello over cheese

BEAT dream whip like it says on

the package till stiff

Fold with other above mixture.

Roll out crackers crush them up

add melted oleo for crust add

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar to cracker's crumbs

Line pan with cracker's crumbs

Pour filling over crackers + set