

Is it a hot dish? Is it a casserole? Whatever you like to call them, they are usually a staple in most families during these snowy and cold months. Bake up your favorite 'dish' or try a new one.

Let us know if there is something you would like us to put in our column, or if you have a recipe to share, please submit to ads@thedrummer.com.

Baked Ratatouille Sausage Penne

Prep: 30 mins

Bake: 35 mins

Total: 1 hr 5 mins

Servings: 6

Uncooked turkey Italian sausage links (12 oz. total)
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 tsp. olive oil
1 - 14.5 oz. can no-salt-added diced tomatoes
3 T. snipped fresh parsley
1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper (opt.)
1 lb. eggplant, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes
6 oz. dried whole wheat penne pasta (about 2-1/4 c.)
1/3 c. finely shredded Parmesan cheese
Snipped fresh parsley (opt.)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Place sausage links in an unheated skillet. Add 1/2 inch of water to the skillet. Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Cover and simmer about 15 minutes or until juices run clear; drain off liquid. Cook for 2 to 4 minutes more or until browned, turning occasionally. Remove from heat. When cool enough to handle, cut sausages in half lengthwise; bias-cut into 1/2-inch-thick slices. Set aside.

In a large skillet, cook garlic in hot olive oil for 1 minute. Stir in undrained tomatoes, the 3 tablespoons parsley, and, if desired, the crushed red pepper. Bring to boiling. Stir in eggplant. Reduce heat. Cover and simmer for 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, cook pasta according to package directions, cooking it for the minimum time listed; drain. Return pasta to hot pan. Stir in eggplant mixture and sausage. Spoon into a 2-quart baking dish.

Bake, covered with foil, about 30 minutes or until heated through. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Uncover and bake about 5 minutes more or until cheese melts. If desired, sprinkle with additional parsley.

Broccoli Macaroni and Cheese

Hands-On: 30 mins

Total: 55 mins

Servings: 12

Yield: 9 cups

7 oz. Swiss cheese, shredded (1 3/4 cup)
7 oz. mild cheddar cheese, shredded (1 3/4 cup)
2-1/2 c. dried elbow macaroni
3 c. bite-size broccoli florets
2/3 c. chopped onion
2 T. butter
2 T. all-purpose flour
1/4 tsp. ground black pepper
3 c. milk
2 T. butter, melted
1/3 c. fine dry breadcrumbs
1/4 c. grated Parmesan cheese

Let both cheese stand at room temperature for 30 minutes.

Cook macaroni in a large pot according to package directions until tender, but still firm, adding broccoli during the last 5 minutes of cooking. Drain well and return to pot; set aside.

Meanwhile, in a medium saucepan, cook the onion in 3 tablespoons butter until tender but not brown. Stir in the flour and the pepper. Add the milk all at once. Cook and stir until the mixture is slightly thickened and bubbly. Remove from heat. Gradually add both cheeses, stirring until melted (the mixture will appear slightly curdled). Pour over the macaroni and broccoli and stir gently to combine. Transfer mixture to a 2-1/2- to 3-quart baking dish.

In a small bowl combine melted butter, breadcrumbs, and Parmesan cheese. Toss to coat. Sprinkle over the macaroni mixture.

Bake in a 350°F oven about 20 minutes or until heated through. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving.

Fiesta Tortilla-Shrimp Casserole

Prep: 20 mins

Bake: 45 mins

Total: 1 hr 5 mins

Servings: 4

6-in. corn tortillas

1 c. green salsa
1/2 c. sour cream
3 T. all-purpose flour
4 tsp. dried cilantro, crushed
1 - 12-oz. pkg. frozen peeled and deveined cooked shrimp, thawed
1 c. frozen whole kernel corn
1 c. shredded Mexican Chihuahua cheese or farmer cheese (4 oz.)
Snipped fresh cilantro, sour cream, and/or chopped tomato (opt.)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly grease a 2-quart baking dish. Cut each of three tortillas into six wedges; place in the bottom of the prepared baking dish. Set aside. Cut the remaining three tortillas into thin bite-size strips; place on a baking sheet. Bake, uncovered, about 10 minutes or until crisp.

Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, combine salsa, sour cream, flour, and dried cilantro. Stir in shrimp and corn. Spoon shrimp mixture over tortillas in dish.

Bake, uncovered, for 40 to 45 minutes or until heated through. Top with baked tortilla strips and cheese. Bake, uncovered, about 5 minutes more or until cheese is melted. If desired, garnish with fresh cilantro, additional sour cream, and/or tomato.

Hamburger Pie

Prep: 30 mins

Bake: 30 mins

Total: 1 hr

Servings: 6

Mashed Potatoes*

1-1/4 lbs. lean ground beef
1/2 c. chopped onion (1 medium)
1/4 tsp. salt
Dash black pepper
2-1/2 c. frozen cut green beans, thawed
1 - 10.75 oz. can condensed tomato soup
1/2 c. shredded process American cheese (2 oz.)

Prepare Mashed Potatoes*; set aside. In a large skillet cook meat and onion until meat is brown and onion is tender. Drain off fat. Add the salt and pepper. Stir in thawed beans and soup; pour into a greased 2-quart rectangular baking dish or casserole.

Spoon Mashed Potatoes in mounds on bean mixture (or, if desired, pipe potatoes using a pastry bag and a large star tip). Sprinkle cheese over the potatoes. Bake, uncovered, in a 350-degree F oven for 30 to 35 minutes or until mixture is bubbly and cheese begins to brown.

***Three Mashed Potato Options:**

1. Use four servings refrigerated mashed potatoes.
2. Prepare 4 servings instant mashed potatoes according to package directions, except reserve the milk. Add egg and season to taste with salt and pepper. Add enough reserved milk so potatoes are stiff enough to hold their shape.
3. Make mashed potatoes using 5 medium potatoes.

Pizza Pasta Skillet Casserole

Prep: 35 mins

Bake: 35 mins

Total: 1 hr 10 mins

Servings: 8

Yield: 8 cups

2 c. dried cavatappi (cellentani) pasta
1 - 3.5-oz. package thinly sliced pepperoni
1-lb. lean ground beef
1/3 c. finely chopped onion
1 - 8 oz. pkg. mushrooms, sliced
1 - 15 oz. can pizza sauce
1 - 8 oz. can tomato sauce
1 - 6 oz. can tomato paste
1/2 tsp. sugar
1/8 tsp. ground black pepper
1/8 tsp. garlic salt
1/8 tsp. onion salt
2 c. shredded mozzarella cheese
1 T. grated Parmesan cheese

Cook pasta according to the package directions, except omit the salt; drain. Return drained pasta to pot.

Meanwhile, cut 3/4 of the pepperoni slices in quarters; set aside.

In a large oven-going skillet, cook ground beef, onion and mushrooms until meat is brown and onion is tender; drain off fat.

Stir in the reserved quartered pepperoni slices, the pizza sauce, tomato sauce, tomato paste, sugar, pepper, garlic salt and onion salt. Add beef mixture to the cooked, drained pasta in the pot. (Do not rinse skillet.) Stir to combine.

Return half of the pasta-beef mixture to the skillet. Sprinkle with half of the mozzarella cheese. Repeat layers. Top with the reserved whole pepperoni slices and sprinkle with the Parmesan cheese.

Bake in a 350° oven for about 35 minutes or until casserole is heated through and cheese and pepperoni are lightly browned.

Tips: This recipe is very flexible. If you like, add or substitute other favorite pizza toppings. You can add chopped red or green sweet peppers with the beef and onion or stir in sliced pitted ripe olives with the pepperoni. Or try substituting sweet or hot Italian sausage for the ground beef.

Tuna and Green Bean Bake

Prep: 35 mins

Bake: 25 mins

Total: 1 hr

Servings: 6

4 oz. dried medium noodles
3 T. panko (Japanese-style breadcrumbs) or fine dry bread crumbs (opt.)
1 T. butter, melted (opt.)
10 oz. fresh green beans, trimmed and cut into 2-inch pieces, or one 10-oz. pkg. frozen cut green beans
1 c. sliced fresh mushrooms
3/4 c. chopped red or green sweet pepper (1 medium)
1/2 c. chopped onion (1 medium)
1/2 c. sliced celery (1 stalk)
1/2 c. water
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 - 10.75 oz. can reduced-fat and reduced-sodium condensed cream of mushroom soup
1/2 c. fat-free milk
1/2 c. cubed or shredded reduced-fat American or process Swiss cheese (2 ounces)
2 - 4.5-oz. cans very low sodium chunk white tuna in spring water, drained and flaked
Fish-shape crackers (opt.)

Preheat oven to 350°F. Cook noodles according to package directions; drain and set aside.

Meanwhile, if desired, in a small bowl toss panko with butter; set aside.

In a large saucepan combine green beans, mushrooms, sweet pepper, onion, celery, the water, and garlic. Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Simmer, covered, about 5 minutes or until vegetables are tender.

Stir cream of mushroom soup and milk into vegetable mixture. Cook and stir until heated through. Remove from heat. Add cheese, stirring until melted. Stir in cooked noodles and tuna.

Spoon mixture into an ungreased 2-quart casserole. If desired, sprinkle panko mixture around outside edge of casserole. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until tuna mixture is bubbly and panko mixture is golden brown. If desired, top with fish-shape crackers.

Peanut Butter Cupboard Cookie Bars

Level: Easy

Total: 1 hr 50 min

Prep: 30 min

Inactive: 1 hr

Cook: 20 min

Yield: 16 bars

Peanut Butter Cookie Base:

5 T. unsalted butter, softened, plus more for greasing
1 c. all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
1/4 tsp. baking soda
1/8 tsp. fine salt
1/2 c. crunchy natural peanut butter
1/2 c. packed light brown sugar
1 lrg. egg

Chocolate Sour Cream Frosting:

1 c. semisweet chocolate chips
6 T. unsalted butter, softened
1 c. confectioners' sugar
1/4 c. sour cream

Toppings:

1/4 c. lightly crushed candy-coated peanut butter candies
1/2 c. lightly crushed potato chips
1/2 c. broken-up pretzel sticks

For the peanut butter cookie base: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F with a rack set on the middle shelf. Lightly butter a 9-by-9-inch baking dish. Whisk together the flour, baking soda and salt in a medium bowl.

Combine the butter, peanut butter and brown sugar in another medium bowl. Beat with a hand mixer until creamy, about 2 minutes. Add the egg and mix well. Add the dry ingredients and beat until just combined. With lightly floured hands, press the dough into the prepared baking dish and bake until lightly browned, 24 to 28 minutes. Place the baking dish on a cooling rack and cool completely.

For the chocolate sour cream frosting: Place the chocolate chips in a medium heat-proof bowl. Microwave in 30 second intervals until the chocolate is melted. Set aside to cool slightly.

Whip the butter with a hand mixer until light and fluffy. On low speed, add the confectioners' sugar, 1/2 cup at a time, and whip until all of the sugar has been added and the mixture is smooth and creamy. Add the melted chocolate and sour cream and mix until well combined.

To assemble: Spread the chocolate sour cream frosting evenly on top of the peanut butter cookie base. Top with the crushed peanut butter candies, potato chips and pretzels. Cut into 16 bars and use a small offset spatula to remove the bars from the pan.

Cook's Note: Regular or natural peanut butter works here, just makes sure it's emulsified.

Cake Doughnut Bread Pudding

Level: Easy

Total: 1 hr 10 min

Prep: 15 min

Inactive: 10 min

Cook: 45 min

Yield: 8 to 10 servings

Bread Pudding:

1 stick unsalted butter
1 c. sugar
5 lrg. eggs, lightly beaten
2 c. heavy cream
1-1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1 T. pure vanilla extract
1/2 c. raisins
16 cake doughnuts

Rum sauce:

4 T. unsalted butter
1/2 lb. confectioners' sugar
Dark rum, to taste

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

In a food processor, combine butter and sugar briefly, just until it forms into a ball. Add eggs, heavy cream, cinnamon, and vanilla, and process until blended.

Lightly butter a 9 by 13-inch baking dish. Break up the doughnuts into 1-inch pieces and layer in the pan. Scatter the raisins over the top. Pour the egg mixture over the doughnuts; soak for 5 to 10 minutes. You will need to push doughnut pieces down during this time to ensure even coverage by egg mixture.

Cover with foil and bake for 35 to 40 minutes. Remove foil and bake for additional 10 minutes to brown the top. The doughnut bread pudding is done when the custard is set, but still soft.

Make the rum sauce: melt butter over medium heat in a saucepan, and take off the heat. Add confectioners' sugar to the melted butter and whisk to blend. Add rum, to taste. Pour the sauce over the bread pudding and allow to soak in.

Quote of the Week:

"You don't have to see the whole staircase. Just take the first step."

~ Martin Luther King