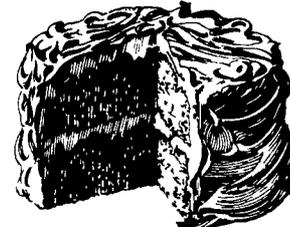


Home On The Range



Stretch your budget with casseroles

If you put many of your holiday purchases on your credit card, the bills are probably starting to arrive in the mailbox. And even if you didn't, a lower grocery bill each week would probably be a welcome change.

One way to stretch your food budget is to serve casseroles one or more times a week. Many casserole recipes call for inexpensive ingredients and are an excellent way to make a little bit of meat go a long way. Others rely on cheese and other nutritious ingredients in place of meat.

Below are a few casserole recipes from our readers' files to get you started.

MACARONI SPINACH CASSEROLE

2 tablespoons salt (omit if on low-sodium diet)
4 to 6 quarts boiling water
1 pound elbow macaroni
1 medium onion, chopped
½ cup butter
2½ teaspoons salt (or to taste)
½ cup flour
5 cups milk
2 eggs, beaten
1 cup cottage cheese
2 10-ounce packages frozen chopped spinach, cooked and drained
Bread crumbs
Add salt to boiling water. Gradually add macaroni so that water continues to boil. In medium saucepan saute onion in butter until crisp-tender. Mix in flour and salt. Gradually add 4 cups milk. Cook, stirring constantly until sauce boils - 2 minutes. Blend remaining milk and eggs, stir into sauce with cottage cheese.

Place half the macaroni in shallow 3-quart casserole. Top with spinach, half the sauce, then remaining macaroni. Pour remaining sauce on top and sprinkle with bread crumbs. Bake at 350°F. for 20 minutes.

Agnes M. Andreasen
Allentown

MUSHROOM-POTATO CASSEROLE

1 cup shredded Gruyere cheese
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
½ cup sour cream
½ cup dry curd cottage cheese
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 teaspoon dried leaf thyme
2 pounds potatoes, approximately 4, pared, thinly sliced
½ pound fresh mushrooms, sliced
2 tablespoons flour
Salt and pepper to taste
¼ cup wheat germ
3 tablespoons butter
Combine cheese, sour cream, cottage cheese, onion, and thyme

in medium bowl. Butter shallow 2-quart baking dish; arrange ⅓ of the sliced potatoes in dish. Top with half the cheese mixture and ½ of the mushrooms tossed in flour. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Repeat with remaining ingredients, finishing with layer of potatoes. Sprinkle with wheat germ. Dot with butter. Bake at 350°F. for 1 to 1¼ hours or until potatoes are tender. Cool 10 minutes before serving. Serves 4 people.

Rosene R. Ballinger
Newmanstown

CHEESE BEAN CASSEROLE

6 cups cooked (3 cups raw) pinto beans
2 large cooking apples, cut in chunks
4 medium tomatoes, chopped
2 teaspoons chili powder
Salt and pepper to taste
2 cups chopped onion
2 cups mild white cheese, grated
6 tablespoons water
1 teaspoon dry mustard
To cook beans: Clean the beans and soak them at least 1½ hours before cooking. Cook in plenty of water, covered, about 1½ hours or until beans are done. Drain off excess water. This can be saved for soup.

To make casserole: Saute the onion in a little butter until it is soft and clear. Add chili powder and mustard. Combine cooked beans with sauteed onions and all remaining ingredients. Pour into large buttered casserole. Cover and bake at 350°F. for 35 to 40 minutes.

Makes 6 servings.

COTTAGE CHEESE-SPINACH CASSEROLE

1 medium onion, minced
Butter
10 ounces cooked, drained spinach
1 cup cottage cheese
2 slightly beaten eggs
1 teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper
Saute onion in butter until tender. Mix with remaining ingredients. Bake in buttered 1-quart casserole for 35 to 45 minutes at 350°F.

BEEF AND CHEESE CASSEROLE

1 pound ground beef
1 small onion, chopped
1½ cups uncooked spaghetti
1 cup tomatoes
2 tablespoons butter
3 tablespoons flour
2 cups milk
¾ cup cheese
Cook spaghetti until tender and drain. In a skillet, brown beef and

onion in the butter. Add flour, seasoning and milk. Cook until thick. Mix ½ cup cheese with spaghetti. Place half of spaghetti in greased baking dish. Put in meat mixture. Top with tomatoes. Put on the rest of spaghetti. Sprinkle with remaining cheese. Bake at 350°F. for 25 to 30 minutes.

LUCKY CASSEROLE

½ cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper
4 cups thinly sliced potatoes (about 4 medium)
1 9-ounce package frozen cut green beans, thawed
1½ cups (6 ounces) shredded Cheddar cheese
1 15-ounce can tomato sauce
½ teaspoon sage
1 pound lean ground beef
½ cup fine dry bread crumbs
½ cup milk
¼ cup minced onion
1 egg, slightly beaten

Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine flour; salt and pepper. Layer half of the potatoes, beans and ¼ of the cheese in a 2-quart rectangular baking dish; sprinkle each layer with flour mixture; repeat. Combine tomato sauce and sage. Pour half of sauce over potato mixture. Bake, uncovered, 20 minutes. Meanwhile, combine beef, remaining half of cheese, bread crumbs, milk, onion and egg. Shape into 24 1½-inch balls. Remove casserole from oven and arrange meatballs over potato mixture. Pour remaining sauce over casserole. Bake an additional 45 minutes or until potatoes are tender.

FRIDAY CASSEROLE

¼ cup (½ stick) butter
¼ cup all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons grated onion
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
½ teaspoon EACH: dry mustard, salt
1/8 teaspoon pepper
3 cups milk
1 8-ounce package egg noodles, cooked and drained
1 10-ounce package frozen peas, cooked and drained
1 6-ounce package frozen cooked shrimp, thawed and drained
5 hard-cooked eggs, peeled
1 teaspoon prepared mustard
¼ teaspoon salt
Dash of pepper
2 tablespoons sour cream
1 teaspoon vinegar
½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
Melt butter in a medium-sized saucepan. Stir in flour, onion, Worcestershire, mustard, salt and pepper. Cook until smooth, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Gradually stir in milk. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly. Boil and stir one minute. Reserve ½ cup of sauce. Combine remaining sauce, noodles, peas and shrimp in a 3-quart round glass casserole. Cut eggs in half lengthwise.

Carefully lift out yolks; place in mixing bowl. Mash yolks with a fork and add remaining ingredients; mix until light and fluffy. Fill egg whites with yolk mixture. Press deviled egg halves into mixture around outside edges and in center of casserole. Drizzle reserved sauce over egg halves. Refrigerate, covered, overnight. To reheat, microwave covered



Spinach Cheese Pie is an easy-to-prepare casserole.

with casserole top or plastic wrap, on full power, about 12 minutes, rotating a half turn every 3 minutes, until hot and bubbly. Let stand, covered, 5 minutes before serving.

To reheat in a conventional oven, place casserole, uncovered in preheated 350°F. oven about 30 minutes.

BROCCOLI-POTATO CASSEROLE

4 medium potatoes
½ pound broccoli, chopped
2 tablespoons butter
1¼ cups milk
1 tablespoon flour
1 cup diced natural cheese, any kind
¼ teaspoon pepper

Cut potatoes into quarters. Boil in water until tender. Drain and mash with ¼ cup milk. Beat until fluffy. Cook broccoli in small amount boiling water or steam until tender. Drain. Combine potatoes, broccoli, and pepper in greased 2-quart baking dish. Melt butter in saucepan, stir in flour, and add milk, stirring constantly until thickened. Add cheese and stir until melted. Pour cheese sauce into baking dish and stir. Bake at 350°F. for 20 minutes.

CHEESY FRANK NOODLE BAKE

3 cups uncooked noodles
1 11¼-ounce can condensed green pea soup
1¼ cups milk
1 cup (4 ounces) shredded Swiss cheese
¼ cup chopped onion
6 frankfurters
2 tablespoons sliced pimiento-stuffed green olives

Cook noodles according to package directions; drain; set aside. Preheat oven to 350°F. Meanwhile, combine condensed soup and milk in a medium-sized saucepan. Heat to simmering point; stir in ¼ cup cheese and onion; remove from heat. Cut frankfurters in 1-inch pieces; set aside 12 pieces. Place remaining frankfurters in bottom of a buttered 1½-quart rectangular baking dish. Top with noodles. Pour soup mixture over noodles. Arrange reserved frankfurters around edges of casserole. Bake, uncovered, 20 to 25 minutes. Remove from oven and sprinkle remaining cheese and sliced olives over top of casserole. Return to oven just until cheese begins to melt, about 3 minutes. Serve immediately.

Recipe Topics

If you have recipes for the topics listed below, please share them with us. We welcome your recipes, but ask that you include accurate measurements, a complete list of ingredients and clear instructions with each recipe you submit. Send your recipes to Sue Keene, Lancaster Farming, P O Box 366, Lititz, PA 17543

January 25 Beef Recipes
February 1 Cherries
8 Candy

Featured Recipes

This week's featured recipe comes from a pamphlet distributed by the American Mushroom Institute at the Pennsylvania Farm Show. The mushroom growers and many other commodity groups provided Farm Show visitors with tasty ways to enjoy their products.

Look for stories about Farm Show in this section and throughout this week's Lancaster Farming.

Mushroom Crust Quiche

½ pound fresh mushrooms, coarsely chopped
2 tablespoons butter
½ cup fine dry bread crumbs
1 cup cottage cheese
1 cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese
½ cup chopped green onions
3 eggs, slightly beaten
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper

Saute mushrooms until golden, about 10 minutes; stir in bread crumbs. Pat mixture into 9-inch pie pan or divide among 8 4-inch tart pans. Combine cheeses and remaining ingredients; spoon into prepared crust. Bake at 350°F. for 35 to 45 minutes before serving. Makes one 9-inch pie