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Wife, Mother, Cook

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Dear Friends:

Good food has been a part of my life from the very beginning. I grew up on a family farm in the Lower Yakima Valley, where my siblings and I enjoyed beautiful country style meals expertly prepared by my mother. Mom taught me to cook too and her guidance has blessed my own family.

I taught elementary school for many years. It was during that time I discovered my local dollar store was an ideal place to purchase classroom supplies. I also discovered many helpful kitchen staples (rice, noodles, dry beans, canned goods, etc.) for \$1 each and found them excellent additions to my home pantry. To make a very long story short, these dollar store food discoveries led to the cookbook you hold in your hands. I hope "Dollar Dining" will be a source of much pleasure to you and your family as it has been to mine.

Here's a few important things you need to know:

- A dollar store is NOT a grocery store. You will not find fresh meat and produce within and selection is limited. While the food you purchase at a dollar store can help stock your home pantry and feed your family, it's very important to purchase some amount of fresh meat and produce to ensure a healthy well-balanced diet. I am very concerned about the lack of grocery stores in too many communities and neighborhoods across our great land. Everyone should have access to healthful fresh food!
- This cookbook contains simple, low-cost recipes - NOT haute cuisine, but tasty dishes I think your family and budget will enjoy.
- When it comes to purchasing fresh produce at a grocery store, please consider the following low-cost options: carrots, celery, green cabbage, red cabbage, bagged fresh spinach, cucumbers and apples. Fresh fruit and vegetables can be a good buy (and far better tasting!) when purchased in season.
- In recognition of copyright laws, I've not identified the name of the dollar store I regularly visit or the brand names of the ingredients you'll find within my cookbook. The ingredients listed were all purchased by yours truly at my local dollar store, but please know the inventory within these mega discount stores is changeable. For example, my store offered vacuum packed pepperoni slices for several years but no longer carries this product. So, do your best while realizing you may have to purchase some items from a standard grocery store.

- You will find I often call for casseroles to be placed in a buttered dish before baking. "Butter" the inside of your baking dish with cooking spray (available at dollar stores), or by wiping the dish with a paper towel dipped in cooking oil or margarine. A light coating is all it takes. The recipes within "Dollar Dining" typically make 6-8 servings and I've found the best sized baking dish for 6-8 servings to be 7 x 11 inch.
- You may find a recipe in which just a half can of vegetables etc. is called for. Refrigerate the remaining half in a small plastic container with a snap-on lid. Your dollar store will have a very nice selection of these containers in a variety of sizes.
- This is my first cookbook and I've carefully edited the contents and tested the recipes. However, if you find an error or have suggestions or questions, please feel free to email me. Your feedback is important!

Home cooking provides physical nourishment and assembles people together amidst pleasant aromas and flavors. Meals are the perfect opportunity to slow down and share the events of the day. But, perhaps actress Sophia Loren said it best: "The most indispensable ingredient of all good home cooking is love for those you are cooking for."

May this cookbook bring much love and comfort to you and yours.

Alys

Dedicated to my beautiful and much-loved mother
Loretta Catherine Murchland Freepons

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Special Feature: Thanksgiving Dinner for Twelve

1. *Biscuit Mix*



9 cups all purpose flour (2 two pound bags), 1/4 cup baking powder, 1 tablespoon salt, 2 cups (4 sticks) margarine, 2 large plastic containers with snap-on lids

Thoroughly blend flour and baking powder in a large bowl. For best results, combine flour and baking powder with a sifter. (Believe me! You don't want to bite down on a lump of baking powder.) Add salt to flour mixture and stir until blended. Cut margarine into small cubes, add to flour mixture. Squeeze the pieces of margarine into the flour with your hands until the bits of margarine are the size of small peas. If you have a pastry cutter, use it to process the margarine into pea sized pieces.

Place the biscuit mix in plastic containers and store in your freezer for up to 8 months.

To use, place 2 cups mix in a bowl, add 1 cup of milk and stir until just moistened. Drop the dough by spoonfuls onto a baking sheet or pan. Each spoonful should be about the size of a small egg. Sprinkle with a bit of grated cheddar cheese, Parmesan cheese or chopped herbs if desired. Bake at 425 degrees F. for 12-15 minutes. Each 2 cup batch will make 8-10 biscuits.

"Mind your own biscuits and life will be gravy." -Unknown

2. *Broccoli Cheddar Soup with Rice*



1 package broccoli cheese rice, 1 five ounce package cheddar cheese, 2 cans cream of chicken soup, 2 cups milk, 1/2-3/4 cup frozen broccoli florets (measure after chopping), 1 1/2 cups chicken broth, 1 can white meat chicken (optional)

Prepare rice according to package directions (this will require margarine.) Set aside. A broccoli pasta mix works well too.

Grate the entire package of cheese. Trim the ends of each broccoli floret stem (this part can be tough) and discard. Finely chop broccoli. Combine soup, milk, broccoli, broth, rice or noodles and 3/4 of the grated cheese in a large saucepan or soup pot. Add canned chicken (drained) if desired. Stir over medium heat until bubbling and smooth. Serve the soup in individual bowls with a sprinkling of grated cheddar cheese on top. **TIP:** If you prefer a thinner soup, add milk to achieve desired consistency.

"My mother made me eat broccoli. I'm President of the United States now and I'm not going to eat any more broccoli." -George H.W. Bush

3. Calico Grits Casserole



1 1/2 cups water, 1 1/2 cups milk, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1 cup quick grits, 1 jar pimentos, 8 ounces frozen spinach, 1 five ounce package cheddar cheese, 3 large eggs, 1/3 cup margarine

Bring water, milk and salt to a gentle boil in a large saucepan. Slowly stir in grits. Adjust heat to low, cover saucepan and cook for 8 minutes. Drain pimentos and chop. Slightly thaw spinach and chop. Grate entire package of cheese and whisk eggs. Melt margarine. Add pimentos, spinach, three quarters of the cheese, eggs and margarine to grits and stir. Pour mixture into a buttered baking dish and sprinkle with remaining cheese. Bake at 350 F. for 45 minutes and let stand 10 minutes before serving.

*Made from ground corn, grits originated in the American South.
The area from Texas to Washington D.C. is sometimes called "The Grits Belt."*

4. Cheesy Chili



2 cans chili, 2 four ounce cheese sauce packets, 1 eight ounce jar mild or medium picante sauce

Combine all ingredients in a large sauce pan. Heat over medium heat until smooth and piping hot. Serve with corn chips, cornbread, biscuits or warm tortillas.

"Why is chili called 'chili' when it's really hot?" -Unknown



5. Cheesy Potato Casserole



2 boxes (3.2 ounces each) dehydrated hash brown potatoes, 1 five ounce package cheddar cheese, 4 ounces cream cheese, 1/2 can cream of chicken soup, 2/3 cup milk, 1/4 teaspoon salt, 1/4 teaspoon pepper, 1/4 cup panko bread crumbs or finely crushed potato chips

Hydrate potatoes according to package instructions and set aside. Grate entire package of cheddar cheese. Cut cream cheese into cubes. In a large saucepan, combine: cream cheese, cream of chicken soup, milk, salt and pepper. Cook over medium heat until smooth and bubbling. Gently add potatoes and grated cheese. Place in a buttered baking dish. Sprinkle with bread crumbs or crushed potato chips. Bake at 350 degrees F. for 30 minutes. **TIP:** 3 cans of canned whole potatoes may be substituted for the dehydrated hash browns. Drain, rinse and cut into small pieces.

"Every diet I ever fell off of was because of potatoes of some sort." -Dolly Parton

6. Chicken Pot Pie

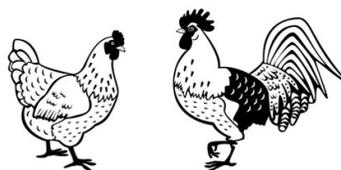


1 five ounce package cheddar or pepper jack cheese, 1 can cream of chicken soup, 1 can white meat chicken, 1 can mixed vegetables or 8 ounces frozen vegetables, 1 1/2 cup milk, 1 package biscuit mix or 1 batch of homemade biscuit mix (see recipe #1)

Grate the entire package of cheese. In a large saucepan mix soup, chicken (drained), vegetables (if using canned vegetables, drain), milk and half the grated cheese. Cook over medium heat until smooth and bubbling. Keep warm. Prepare biscuits according to directions, but add an extra 1/4 cup milk. The biscuit dough should be very soft.

Pour hot chicken and vegetable mixture into a buttered baking dish. Spoon biscuit dough atop and sprinkle with remaining cheese. Bake at 400 degrees F. for 25 minutes.

"Just because a chicken was born in an oven doesn't make it a biscuit." -Jesse Jackson



7. *Chicken and Rice Florentine*



1 1/4 cups uncooked white rice, 2 1/2 cups water, 8 ounces frozen spinach, 4 ounces cream cheese, 1 five ounce package cheddar cheese, 1 can white meat chicken, 1 can cream of mushroom soup, 1/4 cup milk, 1 jar or can sliced mushrooms, salt and pepper

Place rice in saucepan and add water. Bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat and simmer rice for 25 minutes. Set aside. Thaw spinach slightly and finely chop. Cut cream cheese into cubes and grate entire package of cheese. Drain chicken and mushrooms.

In a large saucepan or soup pot, combine: spinach, cream cheese, chicken, soup, milk, and mushrooms. Stir gently over medium heat until smooth and bubbling. Add a few dashes of salt and pepper. Add cooked rice and 1/2 of the grated cheese to the pot and gently stir until well blended. Place the mixture in a buttered baking dish and sprinkle with remaining cheese. Bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 35 minutes.

"Spinach is full of vitamins an' tha's what makes hoomans strong and helty." -Popeye

8. *Chili and Rice Casserole*



1 package saffron yellow rice mix, 1 five ounce package cheddar or pepper jack cheese, 1 can white meat chicken, 1/3 cup sliced black or green olives, 1/2 can sweet corn, 4 ounces cream cheese, 1 can chili

Prepare rice according to package directions and set aside. Grate entire package of cheese. Place cooked rice in a buttered baking dish. Drain chicken, corn and olives.

In a small bowl, stir together chicken, olives, corn and softened cream cheese. Place small spoonfuls of this mixture evenly atop rice. Cover entire casserole with chili and sprinkle with cheese. Bake at 350 degrees F. for 30 minutes.

"Cooking is love made edible" -Unknown



9. Chili Mac & Cheese



1 cup uncooked elbow macaroni, 1 small jar mild or medium picante sauce. 2 cans chili with beans, 1 five ounce package cheddar or pepper jack cheese

Cook macaroni according to package directions and drain. In a large saucepan or frying pan, combine all ingredients. Gently heat over medium to medium-high heat until warm and bubbling. Enjoy!

Chili Mac is one of the most popular MREs (meals ready to eat) served to members of the United States military.

10. Chili with Cheesy Corn Dumplings



1 small package cornbread mix, 1 eight ounce jar mild or medium picante sauce, 2 cans chili, 3/4 cup water, 1 five ounce package cheddar or pepper jack cheese

Prepare cornbread batter according to directions, but do not bake. Set batter aside. Combine picante sauce, chili and water in large skillet. Heat on medium-high until piping hot and bubbling. Turn heat down to medium-low or low to simmer. Evenly spoon cornbread batter (each spoonful about the size of a small egg) on top of the hot chili. Cook uncovered on medium-low or low heat for 8 minutes. Sprinkle with half the cheese and tightly place cover or foil on skillet. Continue cooking for 8 minutes. Remove lid and sprinkle with remaining cheese.

Tips: This recipe can also be made using soft biscuit dough instead of cornbread batter. Apply non-stick cooking spray to the bottom of the skillet lid or foil before placing on dumplings. Also, the chili needs to be piping hot to steam the dumplings properly, but cook on heat as low as possible to prevent the chili from burning against the skillet.

"Dumplings are better than flowers." -Japanese Proverb



11. Chili, Rice and Tamale Casserole



1 package saffron yellow rice mix, 1 five ounce package cheddar or pepper jack cheese, 1 can tamales, 1 can chili

Prepare rice according to package directions and set aside. Grate entire package of cheese. Place cooked rice in a buttered baking dish. Drain excess sauce from tamales and remove paper wrappers. Arrange tamales on top of rice. Cover tamales and rice with chili. Sprinkle casserole with grated cheese. Bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 25-30 minutes.

"It's a cold bowl of chili when love lets you down." -Neil Young

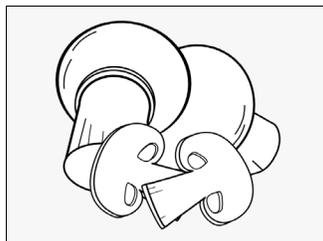
12. Comforting Chicken, Rice and Mushroom Soup



1 package chicken flavored rice mix, 1 can white meat chicken, 1 jar or small can sliced mushrooms, 2 cans cream of chicken or mushroom soup, 2 cups milk, 1 1/2 cup water or chicken broth, 1 1/2 tablespoons dried parsley or chives

Prepare rice according to package directions and set aside. Drain chicken and mushrooms. Combine all ingredients in a large saucepan or soup pot. Cook over medium heat until piping hot. **Tip:** Add a bit of milk if you desire a thinner consistency.

"Advice from a mushroom: Be down-to-earth. Keep a low profile. Know when to show up. Start from the ground up." -Unknown



13. Corn Chowder



1 can whole potatoes, 1 can sweet corn, 1 can creamed corn, 1 1/2 cups milk, 1 can cream of mushroom soup, 1 box chicken broth (32 ounces), 1 tablespoon dried parsley or chives

Drain and rinse potatoes and cut into bite sized pieces. Place potatoes and remaining ingredients in a large saucepan or soup pot. Cook over medium heat until piping hot and bubbling. **TIP:** Sprinkle with bacon bits before serving. Mmmm!

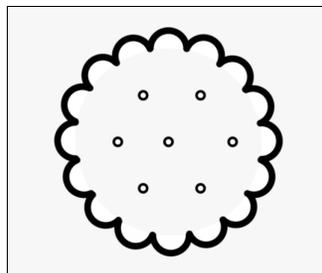
14. Cream Cheese Hors d'oeuvres



1 package "entertaining" crackers (crostini, whole wheat, vegetable, etc.), 8 ounces cream cheese, green olives, black olives, pimento strips, smoked oysters, canned salmon (etc.), dried parsley.

Soften cream cheese at room temperature for 30 minutes and spread on crackers. For extra pretty hors d'oeuvres, apply cream cheese with a pastry decorating kit (star tip) available in the gadget section of your local dollar emporium. Atop the cream cheese, place a single flavorful item - an olive (whole, sliced or chopped) pimento strip, smoked oyster, chunk of salmon, etc. Sprinkle the hors d'oeuvres with dried parsley.

Life is like a giant hors d'oeuvre tray. It is to be savored" - Jack Fitzgerald



15. Creamy Ham and Potato Soup



1 four ounce package sliced luncheon ham, 1 can whole potatoes, 4 ounces cream cheese, 1 1/2 cup of milk, 1 can cream of chicken soup, 1/2 package frozen mixed vegetables, 2 cups water

Chop ham into small pieces. Drain and rinse potatoes and cut into small pieces. Cut cream cheese into cubes. Combine all ingredients in a large saucepan or soup pot. Cook on medium heat until smooth and piping hot. **Tip:** You may substitute smoked sausage for the ham in this recipe.

"Soup is the song of the hearth and the home." -Louis P. De Gouy

16. Easy Huevos Rancheros



6 eggs, 6 flour or corn tortillas, 1 can refried beans, 2 eight ounce jars mild or medium picante sauce, 1 four ounce package cheddar cheese sauce

Boil eggs for 6 minutes. Cool and remove shells. Place eggs in a plastic food storage bag or covered container and place in refrigerator until ready to use. Wrap tortillas in foil and place in a 300 degree Fahrenheit oven for 15 minutes. Turn off oven, but do not remove wrapped tortillas. Warm refried beans in saucepan until piping hot. Combine picante and cheese sauce in a second saucepan and warm until bubbling and piping hot. Remove eggs from refrigerator and cut into quarters.

To assemble, remove warm tortillas from oven, unwrap and place one on each individual plate. Spread refried beans in the center of tortillas. Place four hard boiled egg quarters on top of beans and spoon warm picante-cheese sauce over all.

"A friend is someone who thinks you're a good egg, even though you're slightly cracked."

- Unknown

17. Eggs a la King

6 eggs, 1 jar pimento peppers, 1 jar mushrooms, 1/2 cup frozen peas, 1 can cream of mushroom soup, 1/2 cup milk, salt and pepper to taste

Boil eggs for 6 minutes. Cool, peel and slice. Drain pimentos and finely chop, drain mushrooms.

Place all ingredients, except eggs, into a large saucepan (or skillet) and heat to a very gentle boil over medium to medium-high heat for 4-5 minutes. Gently stir in sliced eggs. Serve the Eggs a la King sauce over steamed rice, biscuits, toast or noodles. **TIP:** Add an extra 1/4 cup of milk for a thinner consistency. This dish looks extra attractive with a sprinkle of dried parsley flakes on top.

"Easter is the one time of year when it's safe to put all your eggs into one basket."

-Unknown



18. Enchiladas Stuffed with Rice, Beans and Corn

2/3 cup uncooked white rice, 1 1/3 cups water, 1 tablespoon taco seasoning mix, 4 ounces cream cheese, 1 can sweet corn, 1 can black beans, 6-8 flour tortillas, 2 jars mild or medium picante sauce, 1 package cheese sauce.

In a saucepan, combine rice, water and taco seasoning mix. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer 25-30 minutes. Place hot cooked rice in a large bowl with cream cheese. Drain corn and beans, add to rice and cream cheese and stir until combined. Place a strip of rice mixture (1/4-1/3 cup) just below the center of each tortilla and roll up to produce individual enchiladas. In a large buttered baking dish, place enchiladas seam side down in a single layer. If you have extra rice mixture, spoon atop enchiladas. In a saucepan, combine salsa and cheese sauce over medium heat until smooth and bubbling. Pour over enchiladas. Bake at 350 degrees F. for 35 minutes.

"I love you a whole enchi-lotta!" -Unknown

19. Gnocchi Soup, Red

1/2 package gnocchi (Italian potato dumplings), 1 small package ground pork sausage, 8 ounces frozen spinach, 1/4 cup sliced black olives, 1/2 cup sliced mushrooms, 1 container spaghetti sauce, 4 cups chicken broth (32 ounce box), 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning, Parmesan cheese

Cook gnocchi according to package directions and set aside. Crumble and brown sausage in a large saucepan or soup pot and drain excess fat. Slightly thaw and chop spinach. Combine all ingredients (except Parmesan cheese) in the saucepan or soup pot. Bring to a gentle boil over medium high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 5 minutes. Place in bowls and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. **Tip:** You may substitute small pasta for gnocchi in this recipe.

“To feel safe and warm on a cold wet night, all you really need is soup.”

-Laurie Colwin

20. Gnocchi Soup, White

1/2 package gnocchi (Italian potato dumplings), 1 small package ground pork sausage, 8 ounces frozen spinach, 1/2 cup pimentos, 2 cans cream of chicken soup, 4 cups chicken broth, 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning, Parmesan cheese

Cook gnocchi according to package directions and set aside. Crumble and brown sausage in a large saucepan or soup pot and drain excess fat. Slightly thaw and chop spinach. Drain and chop pimentos. Combine all ingredients (except Parmesan cheese) in the saucepan or soup pot. Bring to a gentle boil over medium high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 5 minutes. Place in bowls and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. **Tip:** You may substitute small pasta for gnocchi in this recipe.

Gnocchi are small dumplings made of flour, egg, cheese and potato.

Pronunciation: no-key



21. Lentil Soup



8 ounces frozen spinach, 1 cup dry lentils, 2 eight ounce jars mild or medium picante sauce, 4 cups chicken broth

Slightly thaw spinach and finely chop. Place spinach and remaining ingredients in a large saucepan or soup pot and stir to combine. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to low and simmer gently for 60 minutes. **Tip:** For extra nutrition, add sliced smoked sausage and serve with hot cooked rice.

"Lentils are friendly, the Miss Congeniality of the bean world." -Laurie Colwin



22. Loaded Mashed Potato Bake



4 ounces cream cheese, 1 six ounce package instant mashed potatoes, 4-6 strips bacon, 1 five ounce package cheddar cheese, 1 tablespoon dried chives (or parsley.)

Cube cream cheese and let rest at room temperature for 25 minutes to soften. Prepare mashed potatoes according to package directions (this will require milk and margarine.) Fry bacon until crisp and chop into small bits. Grate entire package of cheese.

In a large bowl, thoroughly combine cream cheese, mashed potatoes, 1/2 of bacon bits, 1/2 of grated cheese, and 1/2 of dried chives. Place potato mixture in a buttered baking dish. Sprinkle with remaining grated cheese and bacon bits and chives. Bake at 350 degrees F. for 30 minutes. **TIP:** If mashed potato mixture seems too stiff, add a bit of milk.

"Well, I can mash potato. Well, I can do the twist." -The Hollies

23. *Mexican Style Breakfast Casserole*

1 five ounce package cheddar or pepper jack cheese, 1 package corn tortillas, 1/2 can niblet corn, 1/2 can black beans, 1 can tomatoes and green chilies (or an 8 ounce jar salsa), 1/2 teaspoon taco seasoning, 6 eggs, 1/4 cup milk

Grate entire package of cheese. Cut tortillas into strips or triangles. Drain corn and black beans. In a mixing bowl, combine corn, beans, tomatoes (or salsa) and taco seasoning. In a separate bowl, thoroughly beat together eggs and milk.

Into a buttered baking dish, place a small amount of the corn-bean-tomato mixture. Cover with half the tortilla pieces. Place half of remaining corn-bean-tomato mixture on tortillas and pour half the egg mixture atop. Sprinkle with half the grated cheese. Cover with remaining tortilla pieces, corn-bean-tomato mixture and eggs. Sprinkle with remaining cheese.

Cover and place in refrigerator overnight. Bake at 350 degrees F. for 30 minutes (covered with foil) and 10 minutes uncovered. **TIP:** Before placing foil on casserole, give the bottom of the sheet a spritz of non-stick cooking spray or a light coating of vegetable oil or margarine. This will prevent the foil from sticking to the cheese.

24. *Muffin Pan Ham and Cheese Melts*

12 slices white or wheat bread, 6 tablespoons margarine, 1 package sliced luncheon ham, 1 five ounce package cheddar cheese, 1/4-1/3 cup mayonnaise, 1/4 cup panko bread crumbs

Remove bread crusts and spread margarine on one side of each slice of bread. Chop ham into small pieces and grate entire package of cheese. Place ham and cheese in mixing bowl and combine with mayonnaise. Generously coat muffin pan cups with non-stick spray or margarine. Press bread crusts into each muffin cup, margarine side up. Place even amounts of ham and cheese mixture on bread and sprinkle with panko crumbs. Bake at 375 degrees F. for 15 minutes. Cool for 5 minutes. Remove from muffin pan and enjoy! **TIP:** Try this recipe with tuna salad and cheddar atop the buttered bread (tuna melts) or topping the bread with pimento cheese (see recipe #28). Don't forget the panko crumbs.

25. Nutty Rice Cakes with Peanut Sauce

One box chicken flavored rice mix, 1/2 cup chopped peanuts, three eggs, 1/4 cup bread (or cracker) crumbs, 1/2 cup frozen spinach, 1/4 cup peanut butter, 1/4 cup picante sauce, 1/2 cup chicken broth, vegetable oil or margarine

Prepare rice according to package directions. Place cooked rice in a mixing bowl and cool for 15 to 20 minutes. Chop nuts and add to rice. Beat eggs and add to rice. Add bread crumbs and spinach (finely chopped) and stir until well-blended. Place peanut butter, picante sauce and chicken broth in a saucepan. Stir over medium heat until well blended and piping hot.

Place oil or margarine in skillet and heat until a drop of water placed in the pan sizzles. Form rice mixture into small cakes (patties) and fry on each side until golden brown. Drain rice cakes on paper towels before serving and top with warm peanut butter sauce.

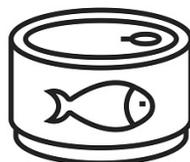
26. Old School Tuna Casserole

3-4 cups water, 1 cup uncooked egg noodles or small pasta, 1 can tuna, 1 can cream of mushroom soup, 1/2 cup milk, 1/2 cup frozen vegetables (your choice), salt, pepper or other seasonings, panko bread crumbs, dried chives or parsley.

In a large saucepan, heat water to boiling and add noodles or pasta. Cook for the amount of time recommended on the noodle or pasta package. Drain.

Drain tuna. In a large saucepan or soup pot, combine tuna, soup, milk and frozen vegetables. Add salt and pepper to taste and any other seasonings you prefer. Heat until warm and gently add noodles. Place mixture in a buttered baking dish and sprinkle with panko crumbs and chives or parsley. Bake at 350 degrees F. for 35 minutes. TIP: Add 1/2 salsa or 1/2 cup canned tomatoes & chilies for a spicy version of this entree.

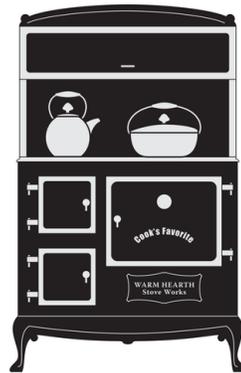
Americans eat about 1 billion pounds of canned and pouched tuna a year.



27. Oodles of Noodles Chicken Soup

1 or 2 cans white meat chicken, 1 can mixed vegetables or eight ounces frozen mixed vegetables, 1 cup dried egg noodles or small pasta, 2 thirty two ounce boxes chicken broth

Drain chicken and canned vegetables. Place all ingredients in a large soup pot. Stir to combine and bring to a gentle boil. Simmer for 8-10 minutes or until noodles are done.



28. Pimento Cheese

1 five ounce package cheddar cheese, 1 eight ounce package cream cheese, 1 jar pimento peppers, 3 tablespoons mayonnaise, salt and pepper to taste

Grate the entire package of cheese. Cube cream cheese and let rest at room temperature for 25 minutes to soften. Drain pimento peppers and chop into small pieces. Add salt and pepper

Place all ingredients in a roomy mixing bowl. Using a sturdy kitchen spoon or electric mixer, combine thoroughly. Serve immediately or store in refrigerator for up to one week. When using refrigerated pimento cheese, let soften at room temperature for 25 minutes before serving. Serve with crackers or fresh vegetables. This makes an excellent filling for a grilled cheese sandwich. **TIP:** Add 1/4 cup bacon bits (or more) for extra deliciousness!

Pimento cheese is sometimes referred to as "the caviar of the American South."

29. *Pinto Bean Soup*



1 five ounce package cheddar or pepper jack cheese, 1 can pinto beans, 1/2 can sweet corn, 1 can refried beans, 1 thirty two ounce box chicken broth (4 cups), 1 eight ounce jar mild or medium picante sauce

Grate cheese. Drain canned pinto beans and corn. In a large saucepan or soup pot, combine cheese, pinto beans, corn, refried beans, broth and picante sauce. Cook over medium heat until piping hot and bubbling. Serve with a generous spoonful of steamed rice for extra nutrition.

30. *Red and White Pasta*

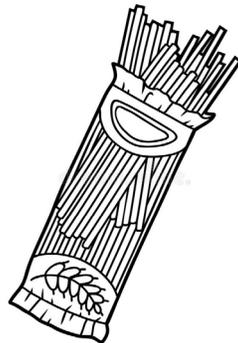


1 small package ground pork sausage, 1 can minced clams or white meat chicken, 1 jar tomato pasta sauce, 1 jar Alfredo sauce, 2 tablespoons pesto, 2 1/2 cups uncooked pasta, Parmesan cheese

Crumble sausage in frying pan and brown. Drain canned clams or chicken. Place tomato pasta sauce in a saucepan and add sausage. Place Alfredo sauce in saucepan and add clams or chicken. Heat both sauces until piping hot. Cook pasta according to package directions and drain.

Place pasta on individual serving plates. Top half the pasta with red sauce and half with Alfredo sauce. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

"Life is a combination of magic and pasta." -Federico Fellini



31. Sausage and Egg Breakfast Casserole

1 seven ounce package ground sausage, 6 eggs, 2 cups milk, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1/4 teaspoon pepper, 6 slices white bread, 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese

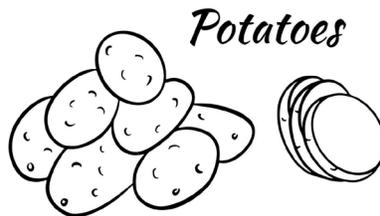
Brown and crumble sausage in a skillet or large saucepan. Drain and set aside. In a large bowl, beat together eggs, milk, salt and pepper. Cut bread into 1/2 inch cubes. Add bread cubes, sausage and cheese to egg mixture. Place in a buttered baking dish. Bake, uncovered, at 350 degrees F. for 40 minutes.

32. Spicy Potato Queso Soup

1 can whole potatoes, 1 can cream of chicken soup, 1 can tomatoes with green chilies OR 1 eight ounce jar mild picante sauce, 3/4 milk, 2 four ounce cheese sauce packets

Drain and rinse potatoes and cut into small pieces. Combine all ingredients in a large sauce pan. Heat over medium heat until smooth and piping hot. Serve with corn chips, cornbread, biscuits or warm tortillas.

***"What I say is that if a man really likes potatoes,
he must be a pretty decent sort of fellow." -A.A. Milne***



33. Sweet Little Candy Bar Cookies



1 package peanut butter or sugar cookie mix, one stick margarine, three packages "fun sized" chocolate candy bars or kisses

Prepare cookie dough according to package directions. Roll dough into small balls (about half the size of a walnut.) If the dough is too soft to easily handle, refrigerate for at least 60 minutes. Bake cookies at 350 degrees F. for 8 minutes and remove from oven. While still warm, press a small chocolate candy bar or kiss into the center of each. Cool thoroughly and enjoy.

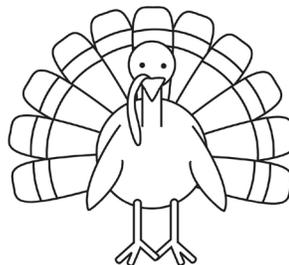
34. Turkey and Stuffing Casserole



1 five ounce package cheddar cheese, 2 cans white meat turkey, 1 cup frozen broccoli or spinach, 1 can cream of mushroom soup, 1 1/3 cups milk, 1 six ounce box turkey flavored stuffing mix

Grate entire package of cheese. Drain canned turkey. Finely chop broccoli or spinach. Thoroughly combine soup and milk in a large mixing bowl.

To the soup and milk mixture, add half the grated cheese, and all of the turkey, chopped vegetables, and stuffing mix. Mix gently and place in a buttered baking dish. Bake at 375 degrees F. for 30 minutes. Top with remaining cheese during last 10 minutes of baking. **TIP:** When using frozen broccoli florets, trim the end of each stem and discard before chopping. This part of the floret can be tough. Canned white meat chicken and chicken flavored stuffing mixing may be substituted for turkey. Add a can of drained mushrooms if desired.



35. *Turkey Tetrazzini*



4 cups cooked angel hair pasta, 1 can cream of mushroom (or chicken) soup, 3/4 cup milk, 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, 1/2 cup frozen spinach, 1 jar pimento peppers, 1 jar mushrooms, 1 can white meat turkey (or chicken)

Cook pasta according to package directions (8 ounces dry pasta will make 4 cups cooked pasta.) Drain and set aside. Slightly thaw spinach and finely chop. Drain pimentos and finely chop. Drain mushrooms and turkey.

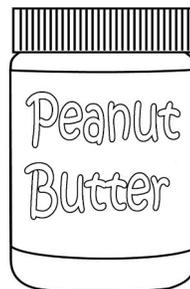
Place soup, milk, cheese, spinach, peppers, mushrooms and chicken in large saucepan or frying pan. Stir over medium to medium-high heat until mixture is thoroughly combined and piping hot. Add angel hair pasta and gently stir all until well combined. Serve and enjoy!

36. *West African Peanut Soup*



1/2 package frozen spinach (8 ounces), 1/2 cup peanuts, 4 cups chicken broth, 1 jar mild or medium picante sauce, 1/2 cup peanut butter

Slightly thaw spinach and chop. Chop peanuts. Combine spinach, peanuts, broth, picante sauce and peanut butter in a large saucepan or soup pot. Cook at medium-high heat until piping hot. Serve with a generous spoonful of steamed white or brown rice for extra nutrition.



Peanut farmers in the United States produce approximately 1.9 million tons of peanuts each year. In fact, the average American eats more than six pounds of peanuts and peanut butter products every single year.