



TUNA NOODLE CASSEROLE

Category: Popular

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Tuna Noodle Casserole

Tuna noodle casserole is a classic comfort food that brings together tender pasta, creamy sauce, and savory tuna in a one-pan meal that's easy to make and perfect for family dinners.

This dish has been a staple in American households for decades, thanks to its simplicity, heartiness, and the ability to be customized with various ingredients.

It's a filling and satisfying meal that can be enjoyed year-round, whether as a quick weeknight dinner or a comforting dish for a cozy weekend. The creamy texture combined with the crispy topping makes this casserole a true crowd-pleaser.

Ingredients:

For the Casserole:

2 cups elbow macaroni (or any pasta of your choice)

1 can (12 oz) tuna in water or oil, drained and flaked

1 1/2 cups frozen peas (or mixed vegetables)

1 medium onion, finely chopped

1 cup celery, chopped

1 can (10.5 oz) cream of mushroom soup (or cream of chicken soup)

1/2 cup mayonnaise

1/2 cup milk

1 tsp garlic powder

1/2 tsp black pepper

Salt to taste

For the Topping:

1 cup shredded cheddar cheese

1/2 cup breadcrumbs (panko or regular)

2 tbsp butter, melted

How to Make:

Cook the Pasta: Begin by cooking the elbow macaroni (or your preferred pasta) according to the package instructions. Once done, drain and set aside. Be sure to slightly undercook the pasta, as it will continue to cook while baking in the casserole.

Prepare the Vegetables: In a large skillet, sauté the chopped onion and celery over medium heat with a little olive oil or butter for about 3-4 minutes, or until they begin to soften. You can also add the frozen peas at this stage if they're not thawed, letting them cook for an additional 2-3 minutes. Once done, remove from heat.

Make the Casserole Sauce: In a large mixing bowl, combine the cream of mushroom soup, mayonnaise, and milk. Stir in the garlic powder, black pepper, and salt. Taste and adjust seasoning as needed. The mayo adds a creamy richness, while the soup brings depth and flavor. If you prefer a lighter version, you can use Greek yogurt or sour cream in place of the mayonnaise.

Assemble the Casserole: Add the cooked pasta, sautéed vegetables, and the drained tuna to the mixing bowl with the sauce. Stir everything together until well combined. Pour the mixture into a greased 9×13-inch casserole dish, spreading it out evenly.

Prepare the Topping: In a small bowl, mix together the shredded cheddar cheese, breadcrumbs, and melted butter. This will form a delicious, golden topping that adds crunch and flavor to the casserole. Sprinkle the cheese and breadcrumb mixture evenly over the top of the casserole.

Bake the Casserole: Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Place the casserole dish in the oven and bake for 20-25 minutes, or until the cheese is melted and bubbly, and the topping is golden brown. If you like a crispier top, you can bake it for an additional 5 minutes.

Serve: Once the casserole is done, remove it from the oven and let it cool for a few minutes before serving. Garnish with freshly chopped parsley or a squeeze of lemon juice if desired.

Chef's Note:

Tuna noodle casserole is a versatile dish that can be customized in many ways. Feel free to add other vegetables such as bell peppers, carrots, or mushrooms to enhance the flavor and nutrition of the dish. You can also switch up the cheese, using mozzarella, gouda, or a cheese blend for a different twist.

If you prefer a lighter version, you can use reduced-fat soup, mayonnaise, or substitute Greek yogurt for added protein and

creaminess. You can also top the casserole with crushed potato chips for an extra crunchy topping instead of breadcrumbs. For a heartier casserole, add a cup of cooked chicken or ham.

This dish is also great for leftovers and can be easily stored in the fridge for up to 3 days. Reheat it in the microwave or in the oven at 350°F (175°C) until heated through.

Nutrition Information (per serving, 6 servings total):

Calories: 430

Protein: 25g

Carbohydrates: 42g

Fat: 18g

Saturated Fat: 7g

Cholesterol: 60mg

Sodium: 600mg

Fiber: 2g

Sugars: 5g

Tuna noodle casserole is a family-friendly meal that combines the best elements of comfort food with the ease of a one-dish dinner. Its creamy texture, rich flavor, and crunchy topping make it a

beloved recipe in many households. Whether you are cooking for your family or meal prepping for the week, this dish is sure to satisfy your cravings for something hearty and delicious.