

To make life easier for meal preparations, the 'Food Section' will present an assortment of hearty, healthy and user-friendly winter and holiday recipes. **For recipe requests or suggestions contact:** SharonS@portlandobserver.com **Subject:** Food Section

FOOD

Baked Mac-N-Cheese

Ingredients

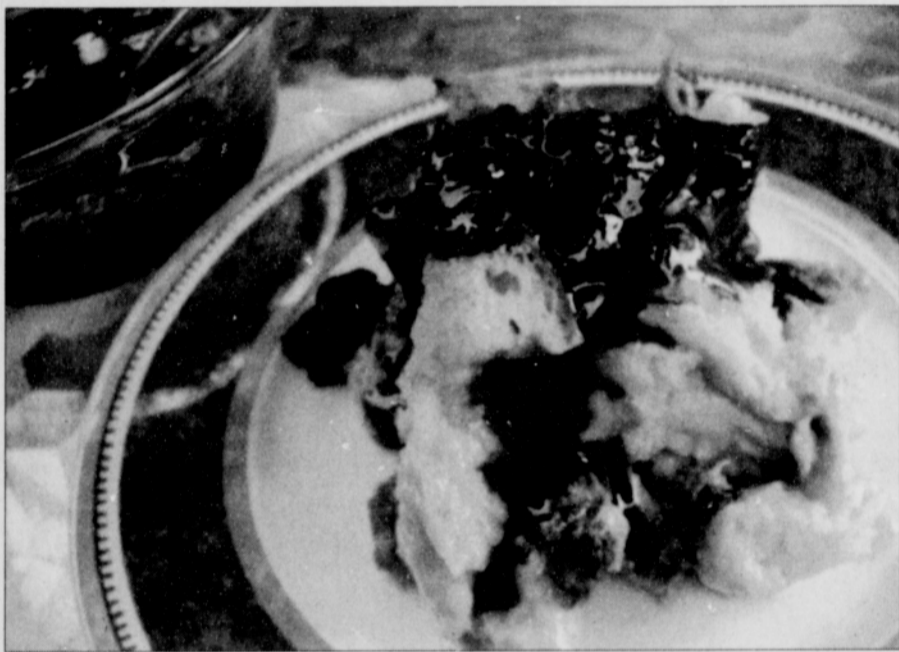
- 2-cups macaroni
- 4-Tbs. butter
- 1- onion, chopped
- 1- clove garlic, minced
- 1-(14.5 ounce) can diced tomatoes
- ¼-tsp. red hot pepper sauce
- ½-cup milk
- 1-1/2 cups shredded cheese: Cheddar, American, Monterey or Pepper Jack (may be used in combination)
- ½ - cup breadcrumbs
- ½ - tsp. Italian seasoning
- Salt & pepper to taste

Directions

- Preheat oven: 350F.
- Cook the macaroni according to package directions. Drain.
- In a saucepan, melt 2 Tbs. butter or margarine over medium heat. Add onion and garlic, sauté until onions have a rich golden color. Mix in the tomatoes, hot sauce, and spices. Stir in milk and shredded cheese (reserve ¼ cup cheese for topping), stirring often. Mix in the cooked macaroni.
- Lightly coat baking dish with cooking spray. Transfer macaroni and cheese to baking dish. Sprinkle with breadcrumbs and the remaining cheese. Dice the remaining 2 Tbs. butter or margarine, and spread evenly over the top. Bake 45-50 minutes or until thoroughly heated.



"Macaroni and cheese is loved by children everywhere. Give this classic family favorite a little pizzazz by using pepper jack cheese as well."



Bread Pudding has long been a southern favorite. Grandma would make it often because it was easy and usually the ingredients were on hand.

Bread Pudding with Maple-Blackberry Sauce

Directions

1. Cut the bread into 1-inch cubes, leave the crust on. Let bread cubes sit out on baking sheet to dry a bit, this will help bread to absorb custard better.
2. In a large bowl, vigorously whisk together milk, eggs, sugar, vanilla, cinnamon and salt. Place the bread cubes and dried cherries in large bowl; pour the custard mixture over the top.
3. Use the backside of a spoon to press the bread into the custard, making sure that each piece is covered. Let soak for 15-20 minutes. Note: If you're preparing in advance; cover and refrigerate overnight prior to baking.
4. Pour the soaked bread mixture into an ungreased 8x 8-inch square-baking dish.
5. Bake 40-45 minutes at 350F.

Ingredients

- 5 cups bread (about ½ of a large loaf) suggest: challah or brioche bread
- 2-¼ cups milk
- 4 large eggs
- ½ -cup sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- ½ tsp. cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ½ cup dried cherries or raisins

6. To test doneness, insert knife into the center of pudding. If knife comes out moist but clean, the pudding is done. Let cool for 30 minutes prior to serving.

Preheat oven: 350 F. Yields nine servings

Maple Blackberry Sauce

Prepare this simple sauce while the pudding is cooling. Just before serving, spoon sauce over warm pudding. This rustic sauce is a delicious compliment to the pudding, as well as pancakes, waffles or ice cream.

Ingredients

- 1-cup berries, (fresh or frozen)
- ½ - cup maple syrup
- 2 -Tbs. sugar
- 1-tsp. vanilla extract

Directions

Combine berries, maple syrup and sugar in a small saucepan. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Once the mixture is

bubbling, gently crush the berries with the back of a fork or spoon. Continue to cook for three to four minutes, remove from heat and stir in the vanilla extract.

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