

Fresh Tuna Casserole

INGREDIENTS:

6 tablespoons unsalted butter, more for greasing the baking dish

8 ounces dry broad egg noodles, elbow macaroni or other noodles

1 ounce bacon or ham, finely chopped (optional)

1 medium white or yellow onion, finely chopped

12 ounces fresh tuna steak, cut into 1/2-inch cubes, or two 6 1/2-ounce cans tuna in oil, drained, flaked

4 ounces white mushrooms, thinly sliced

1/2 cup fresh or defrosted frozen peas

2 tablespoons minced flat-leaf parsley

Kosher salt, freshly ground black pepper

3 tablespoons flour

2 cups milk

1/2 teaspoon dry mustard

1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire

1 cup shredded imported Gruyere, about 4 ounces

1 tablespoon breadcrumbs

1 tablespoon freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano

1/4 teaspoon paprika

INSTRUCTIONS:

Preheat the oven to 375°. Butter a 2-quart baking dish or casserole.

Cook the egg noodles in a large pot of heavily salted, boiling water until al dente, about 8 minutes. Drain.

Meanwhile, in a large frying pan over medium-high heat, melt 3 tablespoons butter. Add the bacon, if using, and fry until the fat is rendered, about 4 minutes. Add the onion and cook until soft, about 5 minutes. If using fresh tuna, add the cubes to the onion and cook, stirring, just until the meat turns opaque, about 4 minutes. Add the mushrooms and cook until they are soft and have given up their water, about 5 minutes more. Add the peas and cook until heated through, a

minute or two. Stir in the parsley and season with about 1 teaspoon salt and plenty of freshly ground pepper. Set aside.

In a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, melt the remaining 3 tablespoons butter. Add the flour and stir to form a smooth paste (roux). Cook this mixture for 2 minutes or so until it gives off the nutty aroma of toasted flour. Whisk in the milk to form a smooth cream sauce (bechamel). Stir in the mustard and Worcestershire. Bring to a simmer, turn down the heat, and cook for 7 or 8 minutes, until the sauce has thickened and there is no floury taste. Season with about 1 teaspoon salt and pepper.

In a large bowl, combine the white sauce with the sauteed mushroom and tuna mixture or canned tuna, the pasta and Gruyere. Adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper. Transfer the mixture to the prepared baking dish. In a small bowl, combine the breadcrumbs, Parmesan and paprika until blended. Sprinkle this mixture over the top of the casserole. Bake until the casserole is bubbling and the top has browned, about 30 minutes.

Serves 6-8

PER SERVING: 335 calories, 21 g protein, 27 g carbohydrate, 16 g fat (9 g saturated), 85 mg cholesterol, 405 mg sodium, 2 g fiber.