

Our State eats

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Baked Spaghetti

Yield: 8 servings.

- 1 (16-ounce) package spaghetti**
- 1 pound 80/20 ground beef**
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 sweet onion, chopped**
- 3 cloves garlic, minced**
- 2 (28-ounce) cans whole tomatoes**
- 1 cup chicken stock**
- 1 teaspoon seasoned salt**
- ½ teaspoon sugar**
- 2 large eggs**
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese**
- 5 tablespoons butter, melted**
- 2 cups whole-milk ricotta**
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese**
- 2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese**

Heat a large skillet over medium heat; add beef and cook until beef is cooked through, using a fork to break up meat. Remove from heat and set aside. In a large pot or Dutch oven, heat olive oil on medium-high. Add chopped onion and sauté for 3 to 5 minutes or until translucent. Reduce heat to medium, add garlic, and stir for 1 minute.

Pour tomatoes and juice into a large mixing bowl. Break up tomatoes with your hands, then add to pot and stir.

Add chicken stock, cooked ground beef, salt, and sugar to sauce, and simmer for 30 to 45 minutes.

Preheat oven to 350°. Lightly grease a 9 x 13-inch baking dish. Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Cook spaghetti in boiling water per package instructions, stirring occasionally until cooked through but firm to the bite. Drain and set aside.



In a large mixing bowl, whisk together eggs, Parmesan cheese, and melted butter. Add cooked spaghetti to egg mixture and toss to coat. Place half of the spaghetti mixture into the prepared baking dish. Top with half each of the ricotta cheese, mozzarella, meat sauce, and Cheddar. Repeat layers. Cover with aluminum foil.

Bake for 40 minutes. Remove foil and continue to bake until the cheese is melted and lightly browned, about 15 to 20 minutes longer.

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Cheeseburger Pasta Casserole

Yield: 8 servings.

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter (divided)**
- 1 large yellow onion or 2 cups, chopped (divided)**
- 2 teaspoons salt (divided)**
- 1 pound ground chuck**
- 1 pound ground sirloin**
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour**
- 2 cups whole milk, room temperature**
- 1 (6-ounce) can tomato paste**
- 1 cup warm water**
- 2 tablespoons yellow mustard**
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder**
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar**
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce**
- 1 teaspoon black pepper**
- 2 cups macaroni noodles, cooked**
- 2 cups Cheddar cheese, shredded (divided)**

Preheat oven to 350°. Prepare a 9 x 13-inch baking dish. In a skillet, melt 1 tablespoon of butter over medium heat; add onions and ½ teaspoon salt, and sauté until onions are soft and slightly brown, about 10 minutes. Remove from skillet and set aside.

Using the same skillet, brown ground chuck and sirloin over medium heat until thoroughly cooked. Sprinkle beef with 1½ teaspoons salt; add 1 cup of cooked onions and stir. Set aside.

In a saucepan, melt 2 tablespoons of butter over medium heat. Add flour and whisk until incorporated. Slowly add milk



and whisk until mixture thickens. Reduce heat to low and stir in tomato paste, water, mustard, garlic powder, brown sugar, Worcestershire sauce, and black pepper. Cook on low for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.

In a large mixing bowl, combine cooked macaroni, ground beef and onion mixture, 1 cup of shredded cheese, and sauce. Pour mixture into baking dish and bake for 30 minutes. Top with remaining cheese and onions and continue baking for 15 minutes or until cheese is melted and casserole is bubbling. Remove from oven and serve.

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Tuna Noodle Casserole

Yield: 6 to 8 servings.

- 1 (8-ounce) package wide egg noodles, cooked al dente per instructions**
- 7 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided**
- ½ medium onion, chopped**
- 2 stalks celery, diced**
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour**
- 3 cups whole milk**
- 2 large eggs, beaten**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- 1 teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper**
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder**
- 2 (5-ounce) cans tuna, drained and flaked**
- 1 can diced water chestnuts, drained**
- ½ cup fresh parsley, coarsely chopped**
- 1 cup plain bread crumbs**
- 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese**

Preheat oven to 350°. Prepare a 9 x 12-inch baking dish with cooking spray. In a medium skillet, melt 1 tablespoon butter over medium-low heat. Stir in the onion and celery, and cook for 5 minutes.

In a large saucepan, melt 4 tablespoons butter on medium-low heat. Gradually add flour while whisking, and continue to whisk until the butter has absorbed all of the flour. Increase heat to medium and gradually whisk in milk and eggs. Continue cooking for 5 minutes, until sauce is smooth and slightly thickened. Season with salt, pepper, and garlic



powder. Stir in tuna, water chestnuts, parsley, cooked onion mixture, and cooked noodles. Transfer to the prepared baking dish.

Melt remaining 2 tablespoons butter and mix with bread crumbs. Sprinkle cheese over casserole and top with bread crumbs. Bake for 45 minutes or until the casserole is bubbly around the edges.

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Lump Crab & Wild Rice Casserole

Yield: 6 to 8 servings.

- 3 cups long-grain wild rice, cooked
- 1 pound fresh lump crabmeat
- ½ pound mushrooms, quartered
- ½ stick unsalted butter
- ½ cup white wine

White Sauce

- ½ stick unsalted butter
- 2½ tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1¼ cups whole milk
- ½ teaspoon garlic salt
- ½ teaspoon celery salt
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- ¼ teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
- 2 cups grated sharp Cheddar cheese, divided
- ¼ cup cooking sherry
- ½ cup fresh chopped parsley

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease a 9 x 13-inch baking dish with butter. Set aside.

Melt butter in a saucepan; sauté mushrooms on medium heat for 2 to 3 minutes. Add wine and simmer until mushrooms are tender. Remove from heat and set aside.



For the sauce: In a pan, melt butter over medium to medium-low heat and whisk in flour. Gradually stir in milk. Add seasonings and half of the cheese. Stir until thickened. Lower heat and stir in sherry. Add crab and parsley and simmer just until bubbling.

Spread cooked rice evenly in the prepared baking dish. Spread the mushroom mixture evenly over the rice. Pour the white sauce with crab over the rice and mushroom mixture. Top the casserole with remaining cheese. Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 30 minutes or until cheese is melted and casserole is bubbling.

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Seafood Casserole

Yield: 8 to 10 servings.

- 4 cups brown rice, cooked per instructions
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
- 1 sweet onion, finely chopped
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 red bell pepper
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 2 cups seafood or chicken stock
- ¼ cup dry white wine
- ¼ cup cooking sherry
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese, divided
- 1 pound medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 8 ounces fresh lump crabmeat
- 8 ounces fresh bay scallops
- ¼ cup fresh chopped flat-leaf parsley

Preheat oven to 350°. Prepare a 2-quart baking dish with cooking spray and set aside. In a large skillet, melt 2 tablespoons of butter. Add onion and celery, and sauté until vegetables become translucent, approximately 2 to 3 minutes. Add bell pepper and sauté for 1 minute. Remove skillet from heat and set aside.

In a separate skillet, melt 2 tablespoons of butter. Stir in flour to make a roux. When butter and flour are well blended, add stock, wine, and sherry, stirring constantly until thickened. Stir in salt, cayenne pepper, and garlic powder. Stir in ¼



cup Parmesan cheese. Add cooked brown rice and sautéed vegetables to sauce and stir.

Pour half of the rice-veggie mixture into the prepared baking dish. Evenly distribute half of the uncooked shrimp over rice. Top shrimp with half of the lump crabmeat and all of the scallops, followed by a second layer of the rice-veggie mixture. Add remaining shrimp and crabmeat on top of rice and sprinkle with remaining Parmesan cheese. Cover and bake for 45 to 55 minutes. Sprinkle with fresh parsley before serving.

Note: *If making this dish ahead, assemble casserole, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate before baking.*

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Curried Chicken & Broccoli Casserole

Yield: 8 servings.

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened**
- 2 cups bite-size broccoli florets, stems removed**
- 4 ounces cream cheese, softened**
- 1 cup light cream**
- 1 cup mayonnaise**
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice**
- 2 teaspoons curry powder**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- 4 roasted chicken breasts, chopped**
- 2 cups sharp shredded cheese**
- 1 cup slivered almonds**

Preheat oven to 350°. Using a large nonstick skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Add broccoli florets and sauté until just fork-tender. Remove from heat and set aside.

In a medium mixing bowl, blend together cream cheese, light cream, mayonnaise, lemon juice, curry, and salt.

Grease an 8 x 8-inch baking dish and layer broccoli and chopped chicken inside. Pour cream mixture over broccoli and chicken. Sprinkle with cheese and almonds. Bake, uncovered, for 25 to 30 minutes or until cheese is bubbling and almonds are golden brown.



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Loaded Potato & Chicken Casserole

Yield: 4 to 6 servings.

- 3 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into ½-inch cubes**
- 1 whole cooked chicken, skin and bones removed, shredded**
- ½ teaspoon salt, divided**
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, divided**
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika, divided**
- 4 slices thick-cut bacon, cooked and cut into pieces**
- 1½ cups shredded sharp Cheddar cheese**
- 4 green onions, sliced**
- 1 cup heavy cream**

Preheat oven to 350°. Lightly grease a 9 x 9-inch casserole dish with cooking spray. Spread half of the potatoes in

prepared dish. Place shredded chicken evenly on top. Sprinkle with ¼ teaspoon each of salt, black pepper, and paprika; half of the bacon pieces; ½ cup of the cheese; and half of the green onions.

For the second layer, spread the remaining potatoes on top of the chicken, followed by the remaining bacon, another ½ cup cheese, and another ¼ teaspoon each of salt, black pepper, and paprika. Pour heavy cream over top of casserole. Cover tightly with aluminum foil and bake for 30 minutes.

Remove foil and bake for another 30 minutes. In the last 10 minutes, sprinkle with the remaining cheese and green onions, and bake until the cheese forms a slight crust and the center is slightly jiggly. Remove from the oven and let rest for 10 minutes before serving.

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Creamy Potato & Sausage Casserole

Yield: 8 to 10 servings.

- 1 pound ground sausage, cooked**
- 1 cup heavy cream**
- ½ cup whole milk**
- 1 tablespoon fresh sage, minced**
- 1 tablespoon fresh garlic, minced**
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened**
- 1 teaspoon salt, divided**
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper**
- Freshly grated nutmeg to taste, approximately ⅛ teaspoon**
- 1½ pounds russet potatoes, peeled and sliced very thin**
- ½ teaspoon salt, divided**
- 1 cup sharp white Cheddar, shredded**
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan**
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, cubed**

Preheat oven to 400°. Coat a 2-quart baking dish with butter. In a saucepan, combine cream, milk, sage, and garlic, and bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring often. Reduce heat to medium-low, add cream cheese, and stir until cheese has melted. Season with ½ teaspoon of the salt, pepper, and nutmeg, and simmer 10 minutes. Set aside.

Layer half of the potatoes in the prepared dish, making sure to get into the corners; season with ¼ teaspoon salt. Evenly distribute half of the cooked sausage over potatoes. Pour half of the cream mixture over sausage; top with half each of the Cheddar, Parmesan, and butter. Repeat layering, then cover dish with foil.

Bake casserole for 50 minutes; remove foil and continue baking until cheese is golden brown, about 10 to 15 minutes more.



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Sausage & Pepper Jack Breakfast Casserole

- 1 pound Neese's Country Sausage
- 12 eggs
- 2 cups milk
- 1 tablespoon salted butter
- 1 cup shredded pepper jack cheese
- 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon oregano
- 1 white or yellow onion, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 slices bread, cubed

Cook sausage and set aside.

Heat oven to 375°. Whisk together eggs, milk, butter, shredded cheese, salt, red pepper flakes, and oregano.

Mix together bread, onion, garlic, and sausage, and spread evenly in a 9 x 13-inch casserole dish. Top with egg mixture and stir.

Bake for 50 to 60 minutes or until eggs have set and the casserole is bubbling.



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Shrimp & Cheese Grits Casserole

Yield: 4 servings.

- 4 cups chicken broth
- 1½ teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 cup yellow stone-ground grits
- ½ cup half-and-half
- ¼ cup cooking sherry
- 1 cup sharp cheese, shredded
- 1 cup Gouda, shredded
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
- 6 green onions, chopped
- 1 medium sweet onion, chopped
- 1 celery stalk, chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 pound medium fresh shrimp, peeled, tails left on
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- ¼ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

Preheat oven to 350°. In a large saucepan, combine broth and ½ teaspoon salt. Bring mixture to a rolling boil; stir in grits. Cover, reduce heat to medium, and cook, stirring occasionally,

until liquid is absorbed and grits are tender, about 20 minutes. Stir in half-and-half, sherry, and cheese; remove from heat. Gradually whisk in eggs until smooth.

In a 10-inch cast-iron skillet, heat 1 tablespoon butter and 1 tablespoon olive oil over medium-high heat. Add onions, celery, red bell pepper, garlic, ½ teaspoon salt, and ½ teaspoon black pepper. Cook, stirring frequently, until tender, about 5 minutes. Add grits mixture to onion mixture; stir to

combine. Bake until set, approximately 30 to 35 minutes. Remove from oven and allow to sit for 10 minutes.

In a nonstick skillet, heat remaining olive oil over medium-high heat. Sprinkle shrimp with ½ teaspoon salt, ½ teaspoon black pepper, paprika, and nutmeg. Add shrimp to skillet; cook until pink and cooked through, 3 to 4 minutes. Spoon shrimp and 1 tablespoon melted butter over grits. Garnish with green onion and serve immediately.



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Wild Rice & Mushroom Casserole

Yield: 10 to 12 servings.

- 4 cups cooked wild rice, prepared according to package directions**
- 1½ pounds assorted mushrooms (cremini, oyster, shiitake)**
- 1 cup chopped celery**
- 1 cup chopped onion**
- 1 stick unsalted butter**
- ½ cup soy sauce**
- 2 cups full-fat sour cream**
- Salt to taste**
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper**
- 1 cup slivered almonds, with extra for garnish**
- ½ cup fresh parsley, chopped**

Preheat oven to 350°. Butter a 3-quart casserole dish.

Clean mushrooms with a damp paper towel. Slice mushrooms and sauté with celery and onions in butter for 10 minutes.

Combine soy sauce, sour cream, salt, and pepper. Add cooked wild rice; onion, mushroom, and celery mixture; and almonds. Toss lightly. Season with salt to taste.

Place mixture into casserole dish. Bake for 1 hour, uncovered. Stir casserole every 15 minutes while baking. Garnish with slivered almonds and fresh parsley. Serve with crusty bread.



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Hash Brown Casserole with Corn Flake Topping

Yield: 8 to 12 servings.

- 32 ounces frozen diced or shredded hash brown potatoes, thawed**
- 12 ounces extra-sharp Cheddar cheese, shredded (about 3 cups)**
- 1 (10-ounce) can or 1 (12-ounce) box cream of chicken or celery soup**
- 2 cups sour cream**
- 1 teaspoon flavored (such as Lawry's or Old Bay) or regular salt**
- 1 teaspoon granulated garlic**
- ½ teaspoon ground pepper**
- 2 teaspoons hot sauce, such as Texas Pete, or to taste (optional)**
- 2½ cups cornflakes**
- ¼ cup shredded Parmesan cheese**
- 6 tablespoons butter, melted**

Preheat oven to 400°. Lightly butter a 9 x 13-inch baking dish or mist with nonstick cooking spray.

Stir together potatoes, Cheddar, soup, sour cream, salt, garlic, pepper, and hot sauce (if using) in a large bowl. Spread the mixture into the prepared baking dish.

Note: At this point, you can proceed with the recipe or cover and refrigerate overnight, which is what I do on Christmas Eve.

Bake (uncovered) until golden brown on top and bubbling around the edges, about 40 minutes.

Toss together cornflakes, Parmesan, and melted butter in a medium-size bowl. Sprinkle mixture evenly over the casserole. Continue baking until cheese melts and topping is golden brown and crunchy, about 15 minutes.

Let stand 15 minutes before serving.



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Four-Cheese Scalloped Potatoes with Fried Onions

Yield: 12 servings.

- 4** pounds baking potatoes, washed, peeled, and halved
- 2** tablespoons unsalted butter, plus more for baking dish
- 1** onion, finely chopped
- 2** cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1** teaspoon Dijon mustard
- ¼** teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1** cup shredded Gruyère (about 5½ ounces)
- 1** cup shredded extra-sharp Cheddar
- 8** ounces cream cheese, softened
- 2** teaspoons salt
- 1** teaspoon black pepper
- 2** cups heavy cream
- 1** bay leaf
- ¾** cup grated Parmesan

FRIED ONION TOPPING:

- 1** onion, sliced very thin
- 2** cups buttermilk
- 2** cups all-purpose flour
- 1** tablespoon salt
- Black pepper to taste**
- 1 to 2** quarts canola oil

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add potatoes to boiling water, reduce heat to medium, and cook for 15 to 25 minutes or until they are not quite tender. Drain and set aside until potatoes are cool enough to handle.

In a small skillet, melt 2 tablespoons butter over medium heat. Add chopped onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, about 6 minutes. Add garlic, mustard, and nutmeg, stirring about 2 minutes longer, until fragrant. Transfer to a medium bowl and let cool.

Preheat oven to 350°. Generously butter a 9 x 13-inch baking dish and place it on a baking sheet.



Add Gruyère, Cheddar, cream cheese, salt, and pepper to onion mixture and stir until well combined.

Slice potatoes ¼-inch thick. Arrange a third of the potatoes in baking dish, overlapping so there are no gaps, and spread with a third of the cheese mixture. Repeat layering twice, finishing with cheese. Pour heavy cream over potatoes and place bay leaf on top. Bake until cream is mostly absorbed and top is golden brown and bubbling, about 1 hour. Remove bay leaf. Sprinkle top with Parmesan cheese, and bake for an additional 15 minutes or until Parmesan is golden brown. Let cool for 10 minutes before serving. Top with fried onions.

For the fried onion topping: Place sliced onions in a baking dish and cover with buttermilk. Soak for at least an hour. Combine dry ingredients and set aside.

Heat oil to 375°. Place a handful of onions in flour mixture to coat. Place coated onions in a frying basket, or use tongs, and tap to shake off excess flour. Place onions into hot oil. Fry for a few minutes and remove as soon as golden brown. Place fried onions on a wire cooling rack over paper towels to drain. Repeat until all onions are fried.

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Green Beans *with* Cheese Casserole

- 1 tablespoon margarine
- 1 tablespoon flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- ¼ cup milk
- ½ teaspoon grated onion
- ½ cup sour cream
- 2 (14½-ounce) cans snap green beans, drained
- 1½ cups grated cheese

In a small saucepan, melt margarine, and thoroughly blend in flour, salt, pepper, and sugar. Cook, stirring until bubbling. Blend in milk. Remove from heat. Stir in onion and sour cream until well mixed. Combine sauce with green beans and cheese; turn into buttered 1 1/2-quart casserole dish. Cover with aluminum foil, and bake for 30 minutes at 350°.



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Corn Pudding

- 4 cups corn, drained
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 2 tablespoons green pepper, chopped
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups milk
- ½ cup butter or margarine

Mix corn, flour, sugar, seasonings, and green pepper. Beat eggs until light. Add to corn mixture. Add milk. Melt butter in 2-quart casserole as you preheat oven to 350°. Tilt casserole dish to coat sides with butter. Stir in corn mixture. Bake for 1 hour or until firm in center.



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Squash Casserole

Yield: 6 servings.

- 3 yellow squash**
- 1 large yellow onion**
- 1 cup extra-sharp Cheddar cheese, shredded**
- 5 large eggs, slightly beaten**
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted**
- 1 cup all-purpose flour**
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- ½ teaspoon black pepper**

Preheat oven to 350°. Prepare a 9-inch square baking dish with cooking spray.

Using a cheese grater or food processor, grate the squash and onion into a mixing bowl. Stir in cheese, eggs, and melted butter.

In a separate mixing bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, salt, and pepper. Add dry ingredients to squash mixture and lightly toss until incorporated.

Pour squash mixture into baking dish and bake for 45 minutes, or until top is lightly browned. Remove from oven and allow to rest for 5 minutes before serving.



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