

Using a billion pounds of pasta takes imagination

Americans love pasta. According to industry sources almost 1.1-billion pounds of pasta are consumed annually. Although the traditional marinara or meat sauce is the most common pasta topping, there are a multitude of alternatives which can transform these old favorites into new dining experiences.

Pasta is easy and economical to prepare, perfect for today's fast-paced society. It comes in a variety of cuts and flavors including egg, spinach, beet, tomato, herb, whole wheat and even carrot.

Pastas must fill certain ingredient criteria in order to be considered of high quality. For instance, egg noodles, unlike most pastas, must contain a minimum of 5.5-percent egg solids. High-quality pastas should contain semolina, a flour made from durum wheat. The addition of this ingredient helps prevent breakage during preparation and produces a product which holds its taste, texture and color better after cooking.

No matter what type of pasta is chosen, a common problem among consumers is the overcalculation of pasta quantity, which may leave you eating the same meal for several days.

Claudia O'Brien, consumer affairs manager for Lawry's Foods Inc., offers these guidelines when serving pasta: "First, keep in mind, 2 ounces of dry pasta (1 cup cooked) is a generally accepted main dish serving size. Adjust this amount according to the number of other dishes being served in accompaniment. Second, when serving rich sauces, which tend to be more filling, reduce the pasta-serving size by a half ounce per person."

Whether you inadvertently prepare more pasta than necessary, or do so with the intention of using leftovers creatively, the Consumer Test Kitchen at Lawry's Foods has compiled a selection of recipes designed to cleverly disguise last night's leftovers. They include everything from a pie using spaghetti as the filling to an Italian variation of the classic Russian stroganoff. Leftover pasta need no longer be viewed with drudgery but as a delectable change of pace.

CHICKEN CACCIAOTORA

1 broiler-fryer (2 lbs.), cut up
2 tsp. seasoned salt
½ cup butter or salad oil
1 pkg. (1½ oz.) spaghetti sauce with imported mushrooms
1 can (14½ oz.) whole tomatoes, cut up
½ cup sautéer or dry white wine
Cooked spaghetti, rice or noodles

Sprinkle chicken with seasoned salt. In a large skillet, brown chicken, a few pieces at a time, in butter or oil until golden. Remove browned pieces; drain fat. In same skillet, add spaghetti sauce mix with imported mushrooms and tomatoes and blend well; add chicken. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer, covered, 30 minutes. Add wine and continue simmering, uncovered, 15 minutes or until chicken is tender. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Serve over cooked spaghetti, rice or noodles. Garnish chicken with chopped parsley, if desired.

STROGANOFF "ITALIAN-STYLE"

1½ lbs. round steak, cut in ½x½x2-inch strips
2 tsp. butter

¾ cup water
1 pkg. (1½ oz.) spaghetti sauce mix
with imported mushrooms
½ tsp. seasoned salt
1 can (8 oz.) tomato sauce
½ cup dairy sour cream
2 tsp. dry sherry wine

In a large skillet, brown steak in butter; add water. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer, covered, 1 hour. Measure pan juices and add water, if necessary, to make 1 cup. Add spaghetti sauce mix with imported mushrooms, seasoned salt, tomato sauce and 1 cup water to meat. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer, covered, 15 minutes or until meat is tender, stirring occasionally. Blend in sour cream and sherry and heat thoroughly. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

BEEF AND SPAGHETTI CASSEROLE

This dish calls for leftover spaghetti, but other types of cooked pasta could be used successfully.

1 lb. ground beef
1½ tsp. seasoned salt
1 pkg. (1½ oz.) spaghetti sauce mix with imported mushrooms
2 cans (8 oz. each) tomato sauce
2 cups water
3 cups cooked spaghetti
½ cup (2 oz.) grated American cheese
Ripe olives
Green bell pepper rings

In a large skillet, brown ground beef until crumbly; drain fat. Add seasoned salt, spaghetti sauce mix with imported

mushrooms, tomato sauce and water; blend well. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, 25 to 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Combine meat sauce and cooked spaghetti. Place in 2-quart casserole. Bake, covered, in 350-degree oven 15 to 20 minutes. Sprinkle grated cheese over top and broil until cheese melts. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Garnish with ripe olives and green bell pepper rings.

THE SPAGHETTI THING

½ small green bell pepper, finely diced
½ cup cubed ham, chicken or beef
1 cup cooked spaghetti
3 tsp. butter
3 eggs, beaten
2 tsp. grated Parmesan cheese
1 cup prepared spaghetti sauce mix with imported mushrooms, heated

In medium skillet, sauté green pepper, ham and spaghetti in 2 tablespoons butter, stirring occasionally. Add remaining butter; when melted, pour eggs over mixture. Add 1 tablespoon cheese and cook over low heat, stirring gently until eggs are set, about 3 minutes. Pour spaghetti sauce over and sprinkle with remaining cheese. Makes 2 servings.

Prepare 1 package (1½ oz.) spaghetti sauce mix with imported mushrooms using 1 can (8 oz.) tomato paste directions.

Garnish with orange slices or wedges and parsley sprigs.

SPAGHETTI PIE

The crust of this pie is seasoned ground beef.
1 pkg. (1½ oz.) spaghetti sauce mix

with imported mushrooms
1 can (8 oz.) tomato paste
2½ cups water
2 tsp. salad oil
1 lb. lean ground beef
½ pkg. (1½ oz.) meat loaf seasoning mix
3 cups cooked spaghetti
¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
½ cup (2 oz.) grated Mozzarella cheese

In medium saucepan, combine Spaghetti Sauce Mix with Imported Mushrooms, tomato paste, water and salad oil; blend well. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, 25 to 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Combine ground beef and Meat Loaf Seasoning Mix; press into a 9-inch pie pan to form shell. Bake, uncovered, in 350 degree oven 30 minutes; drain well. Mix together 1½ cups spaghetti sauce with cooked spaghetti; add Parmesan cheese. Fill meat pie shell with spaghetti mixture; top with remaining sauce and sprinkle with Mozzarella cheese. Bake, covered, in 350 degree oven 10 to 15 minutes. Makes 4 servings.

Sprinkle cooked pie with chopped parsley, if desired. To serve, cut into wedges.

Check out better idea

Over a hundred years ago, a former high school principal with a good idea devised a product that's saving millions of people untold amounts of money today.

The inventor was named George La Monte and he was a paper salesman. He considered the need for a safe, dependable way of transferring funds without transporting large unprotected amounts of cash.

What he came up with was the idea of checks printed on a special kind of paper treated with dyes and chemicals to make erasure and alteration of checks difficult and exact duplication virtually impossible. The dyes are sensitive to the same solutions that remove writing inks from paper, so any attempt at alteration removes the paper's color and design or produces a stain.

The paper must pass a variety of

tests to determine its suitability. Color uniformity is an important control feature.

THE DESIGN is in perfect registration from front to back. Moisture content is also important as it will vary, depending upon the region and conditions in which the checks will be produced.

The paper is also tested to determine its resistance to feathering of writing inks and to determine its strength and resistance to folding and tearing. And finally, waste-paper disposal is strictly controlled. No piece of paper large enough for a check to be printed on gets outside the plant. It is returned to the paper mill and recycled.

It seems safe to say La Monte's idea checks out as something pretty important today.

Try a 'mickie' with meat loaf

Called "mickies" or "murfies" by Irish immigrants or just plain potatoes by people today, this tasty tuber has found a place on the American dinner table.

It is estimated that, just preceding the potato famine of the mid-1800s, the Irish were consuming potatoes at an amazing daily rate of 10 pounds - 30 potatoes per person!

Today, Americans are continuing the love affair with potatoes, although not as avidly as the Irish of a hundred years ago. It's estimated that every one of us eats about one potato a day.

So how does a creative cook bring variety to meat-and-potato dinners night after night? This tasty Potato Meat Loaf Roll is one way. It's a different twist to that family favorite, meat loaf.

Flavorful meat loaf is wrapped around fluffy mashed potatoes. Cut into slices, it makes a meal that's as exciting to look at as it is to taste.

POTATO MEAT LOAF ROLL

1½ lbs. ground beef
½ cup dry bread crumbs
¼ cup finely chopped onion
½ cup milk
1 tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper
1 egg, slightly beaten
Mashed potatoes (enough for 4 servings)
1 egg, slightly beaten
½ cup catsup
1 tsp. packed brown sugar
2 slices process American cheese, each 3x3 inches, cut diagonally into halves, if desired

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Mix ground beef, bread crumbs, onion, milk, salt, pepper and 1 egg thoroughly. Shape into rectangle, 12x9 inches, on waxed paper. Prepare mashed potatoes as directed on package for 4 servings except - decrease water to 1 cup. Stir in 1 egg. Spread potato mixture over beef mixture to within 1 inch of edge. Roll up rectangle carefully and tightly, beginning at 12-inch side and using waxed paper to lift. Press edge and ends of roll to seal. Place roll, seam side down, in ungreased rectangular baking dish, 12 x 7½ x 2 inches. Bake uncovered 1 hour.

Mix catsup and brown sugar; spread over meat loaf in pan. Bake 15 minutes longer. Garnish with cheese slices. Let stand 10 minutes before serving. 6 servings.

High Altitude Directions (3500 to 6500 feet): Heat oven to 375 degree.



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