



The Happy Cooker

by Elayne Susan Stulberg



Casseroles can be elegant with a gourmet flair

Far be it for this writer to criticize an authority like Webster's dictionary.

However, I must take issue with them in their definition of "casseroles." They state that a casserole is "a mold of rice, mashed potatoes, etc., baked with a filling of vegetables and meats." However, I have always looked upon the casserole as a simplified method of preparing and turning out one dish, or an entire meal, with the thought that anything oven-baked and including more than one ingredient can safely be called a casserole.

It can be simple, hearty, nutritious fare or distinguished and imaginative with a gourmet flair. Believe it or not, elegance is readily available in casserole cookery.

With a bit of foresight, a few oven-proof baking dishes and some simple-to-prepare recipes, you can ready an entire meal. At the proper time, you may set the casseroles in the oven to bake together for an all-in-one-meal.

ONE OF THE BEST time and labor saving devices often employed by the working homemaker is the casserole meal. The trick to this method is to plan your entree first.

Whatever oven temperature is used for the entree will determine what foods accompany it. Select vegetables and desserts that can be baked at the same temperature for approximately the same amount of time.

If you are planning dishes which must be browned in the oven, do not attempt to include any foods that produce steam as they cook.

If you own double ovens, set foods which require browning in one and those requiring steaming in the other. Also, try to omit any fresh green vegetables in casserole cooking. They retain much more of their flavor, vitamins and color if they are cooked quickly on your range top.

Custards and puddings, baked and stewed fruits and upside down cakes are grand dessert choices since they bake well with oven meals. Also, if you feel like giving your family an extra treat with dinner, bake some bread a long with the meal.

ANOTHER BOON for the busy or

working homemaker is to bake food in the casserole in which it is to be served. You will save extra washing of pots and pans this way.

And best of all, most ovens have automatic "timed" cooking clocks. While operating instructions differ from model to model, the meal can be placed in your oven long before cooking must start. All you need do is check your particular model's directions, set the clock for the time you wish foods to start cooking and the time you wish to have it shut off. You may leave home safe in the knowledge that you will return to a delicious, fully prepared meal. At dinnertime, you need only set the table, make the coffee, and if you desire, prepare a salad.

1-HOUR OVEN DINNER FOR 6

VEAL PARMESAN
OVEN-BROWNED POTATOES
CORN AND LIMA BEANS IN CREAM
TOSSED GREEN SALAD (optional)
BAKED APPLE SCALLOP
BEVERAGE

VEAL PARMESAN
6 thin slices of boneless veal (approximately 3 1/2 pounds)
3/4 cup all-purpose flour
2 eggs beaten with 1/2 cup water
1 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. white pepper
1 1/2 cups Parmesan cheese, grated and mixed with 3/4 cup dry, fine bread crumbs
1 large onion, diced
4 tbsp. oil
15 oz. can tomato sauce
6 slices Mozzarella cheese

Rinse veal; pat dry with absorbent paper. Pound thin to approximately 1/2-inch thickness. Roll in flour, then in egg-water mixture, and in bread crumbs-cheese to which salt, pepper and garlic powder have been added. Set veal aside.

Heat onion and oil in a pan and simmer until onion is soft and transparent. Remove with slotted spoon, leaving as much oil as possible in pan.

Fry veal, without crowding, over

Vic Caputo cooks

It's quite a jump from parochial school and seminary training to becoming one of local television's most recognizable celebrities.

But that is precisely what Vic Caputo did when he joined Channel 2. Three years of seminary education and training in Berrytown, N.Y. followed local studies at Detroit's old St. Joe and St. Catherine.

Area viewers are quite sophisticated and are aware that the tube doesn't lie. It picks up every nuance, sincere or otherwise. And one characteristic that consistently comes through with Vic is that he really cares.

As a native Detroitite, he both identifies and feels deeply about our city and its people. Besides, explained his exuberant wife, Sandy, "He is just a nice, intelligent, good human being." No arguments from this writer, Sandy, because I am in total agreement.

Initially, Vic came to our attention 12 years ago with his late night talk show on Channel 2. Following that, we enjoyed his 6 and 11 p.m. newscasts and commentary co-anchored with Jac LeGoff.

Vic enjoys putting in the kitchen and the recipe contributed today is one he made when asked by Sandy to pinch hit as chef for an evening. Comments Sandy, "It's nice to have a husband who lets you be liberated, but I have to be careful about letting him cook, because he makes me look bad."

ITALIAN MEAT LOAF

Combine: 2 eggs
1/4 cup Italian style bread crumbs
16 oz. can tomato paste
1/2 cup chopped onion
1/2 cup finely chopped green pepper
3/4 tsp. salt
Dash pepper
Add: 1 1/2 lbs. ground beef

Mix well and pat 1/2 mixture into an 8x8-inch baking pan.

Combine 1/2 cup Italian style bread crumbs, one 12-ounce carton ricotta cheese, 3-ounce can chopped mushrooms, drained, one tbsp. parsley, snipped, and 1/4 tsp. oregano, crushed. Spread evenly over meat mixture in pan.

Top with remaining meat, patting smooth. Bake at 350 degrees in oven for one hour.

Remove from oven; arrange three slices Mozzarella cheese, cut diagonally into halves, in overlapping pattern on top of meat loaf. Return to oven for approximately one minute or until cheese begins to melt. Let stand for 10 minutes. Serves eight.

medium heat until browned on both sides. Place in baking dish. Add tomato sauce to remaining oil in frying pan and simmer for a minute or two, scraping any crusty parts and stirring; add sautéed onions and stir to blend.

Completely cover veal with sauce and top with cheese slices. Cover baking dish tightly and bake at 325-degrees for 1 hour.

OVEN-BROWNED TATERS

Peel and cut 12 small-sized potatoes into bite-size. Brush a shallow baking dish with melted butter or margarine. Dip or brush potatoes with it. Sprinkle with salt, pepper, and paprika. Bake uncovered, on top rack at 325-degrees for 1 hour.

CORN AND LIMA BEANS IN CREAM

Partially defrost one frozen package of corn and one frozen package of lima beans. Defrost only enough to break into sections. Place in a buttered 2-quart casserole. Gently stir in one can, undiluted, Cream of Mushroom Soup. Cover and cook on lower rack in 325-degree oven for 1 hour.

BAKED APPLE SCALLOP

24 macaroons (plain, crisp wafer type) finely crushed
4 tbsp. melted butter or margarine
3/4 cup brown sugar
4 large apples, peeled, cored and sliced
2 tbsp. lemon juice
1/4 tsp. cinnamon
Sprinkling of granulated sugar (optional)
1/4 cup hot water mixed with 1 tsp. vanilla

Blend crushed macaroons, butter and brown sugar. Grease 1 1/2-quart casserole and pat 1/2 crumb mixture on bottom.

Arrange 1/2 apple slices on top of crumbs. Sprinkle 1 tbsp. lemon juice and 1/4 tsp. cinnamon. Repeat procedure, using half of remaining crumb mixture on top of apples. Then arrange remaining apple slices, lemon juice, and cinnamon. Cover top with remaining crumb mixture. Spoon hot water-vanilla over all. Bake, uncovered, at 325 degrees for 1 hour.

WE GET LETTERS!

"I am planning a party and would like to do something different. What cookbook would you recommend devoted entirely to Mexican cuisine?" writes Ms. A. G. Greene of Bloomfield Hills.

"The Cuisines of Mexico," by Diana Kennedy is a favorite of mine and virtually a culinary tour of Mexico with nearly 200 recipes. It also contains a marvelous section on creative menus which will assure your Mexican party success. Feliz Tiempo De Fiesta (or happy party time).

Mrs. Barbara Bryant of Troy has a bet going with a friend. She asks, "How many ears of corn would be needed to yield 3 cups kernels?"

Twelve average size ears would give you three cups. Hope you won your bet!

Mrs. Stulberg is a food writer/restaurant reviewer, lecturer and author of the gourmet cookbook for dieters, The Happy Cooker. All communications and book purchase inquiries should include name, address and telephone number. Send to The Happy Cooker, P.O. Box 573, Pontiac, Mich. 48055.

Planning menus can be rewarding

Planning and preparing meals for one or two can be a most exciting and enjoyable experience. Delicious and delightful dining starts with basic planning. If possible, prepare menus for a week at a time.

Consider planning combinations. Crunchy foods are good accents for softer foods. Bright colors such as a red tomato wedge or a bright green sprig of parsley dress up an otherwise colorless dish.

Following a good menu plan, develop your weekly shopping list. If you shop at one supermarket, organize your list to follow the layout of the store.

Winter sports are fun, but strenuous

Here's a winter tip from the Michigan Heart Association. Skiing, snowmobiling and skating can be a lot of fun, but they can also put a strain on your heart.

If you're going to participate in winter sports, build up your activity level gradually. Remember to dress warmly, rest when you need to, and never smoke when you're outside in cold weather.

If you think these recipes were great, wait til next Monday.

Don't miss.


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