

Cooking Corner

Tips To Help You

Tips On Making Big Meals Less Stressful

(NAPSA)—Whether it's an impromptu gathering of family or friends, or a planned special occasion, preparing a big meal can be a stressful experience. But a few simple tips can help you enjoy your next entertaining meal as much as your guests will.

The first step to creating a less stressful meal for large numbers is to shop smartly, says Jenny Harper, director of recipe development for Carnation Evaporated Milk. She advises stocking your pantry with convenient, easy-to-store items that you can turn to in a pinch, like evaporated milk, dried pasta and chicken broth.

Here are some other top tips to create a satisfying meal that you will enjoy as much as everyone else.

- Choose appropriate recipes for your skill level and your guests. Don't get caught up making an elaborate dish that people may not appreciate.

- Consider a buffet; it makes serving a lot of people easier and requires less work to set the tables.

- Don't be afraid to serve ready-made foods for the side dishes, like instant mashed potatoes. Not all your dishes need to be made from scratch.

- Put friends and family to work for you. Most parties end up in the kitchen anyway, so put those extras hands to good use!

To impress the guests without much stress, here are two recipes you can try at your next meal for a large group. For more recipe ideas, visit VeryBestBaking.com.

Cheesy Creamy Pasta Casserole *Makes 8 servings*

1 pkg. (16 oz.) any tube pasta (rigatoni, mostaccioli or penne)



Convenient, easy-to-store items such as evaporated milk can be used to create great dishes.

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup ($\frac{1}{2}$ stick) butter or margarine
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour
1 tsp. salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. ground black pepper
1 can (12 fl. oz.) Nestlé Carnation Evaporated Milk
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
1 can (14 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz.) cream-style corn, divided
1 jar (4 oz.) sliced pimientos, drained, divided
1 poblano pepper, roasted, peeled and chopped, divided
1 cup (4 oz.) shredded cheddar cheese
1 cup (4 oz.) shredded Chihuahua or Monterey Jack cheese

PREHEAT oven to 350°F. Grease 13 x 9-inch baking dish.

COOK pasta according to package directions. Drain; set aside.

MELT butter in small saucepan over medium heat. Stir in flour, salt and black pepper until smooth. Gradually stir in evaporated milk and water. Cook, stirring constantly, until mixture comes just to a boil and thickens. Remove from heat; set aside.

SPREAD $\frac{1}{3}$ of white sauce on the bottom of prepared

dish. Top sauce with half of pasta, $\frac{1}{3}$ of sauce, half of creamed corn, half of pimientos and half of poblano. Sprinkle with cheddar cheese. Repeat with remaining pasta, sauce, corn, pimientos and poblano. Top with Chihuahua cheese. Cover with foil.

BAKE for 20 minutes. Remove foil and bake an additional 5 minutes.

Baked Potato Soup *Makes 4 servings*

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup ($\frac{1}{2}$ stick) butter or margarine
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped onion
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour
1 can (14 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.) chicken broth
1 can (12 fl. oz.) Nestlé Carnation Evaporated Milk
2 large or 3 medium baking potatoes, baked or microwaved
Salt and ground black pepper to taste
4 strips bacon, cooked and crumbled
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (2 oz.) shredded cheddar cheese
3 Tbsp. sliced green onion

MELT butter in large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion; cook, stirring occasionally, for 1 to 2 minutes or until tender. Stir in flour. Gradually stir in broth and evaporated milk. Scoop potato pulp from *one* potato; mash. Add pulp to broth mixture. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until mixture just comes to a boil. Dice *remaining* potato skin and potato(es); add to soup. Heat through. Season with salt and pepper. Top each serving with bacon, cheese and green onion.