

Two-Cheese Turkey Tetrazzini

This classic American recipe is the perfect use for leftover Thanksgiving turkey. Supposedly the recipe is named after the Italian born opera star Luisa Tetrazzini. The original recipe is believed to have originated in San Francisco, California—but this one is an updated version that my mother made when I was a kid. I have always loved it.

Note: For a richer dish, substitute one cup of cream or half-and-half (light cream) for one of the cups of whole milk.

Yield: 6 to 8 servings

1 quart whole milk
1 pound dried spaghetti
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
2 ounces diced pancetta or bacon
2 cups sliced mushrooms
1/2 medium onion, diced
1 large garlic clove, minced
Salt
1/2 cup shelled peas (optional)
1/4 cup butter (1/2 stick)
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
2 tablespoons dry sherry
1 pound cooked, diced turkey
4 ounces shredded Emmenthaler or Swiss cheese
2 ounces grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Heat the milk (do not boil); keep warm. Cook the spaghetti in a large pot until al dente, following package instructions. Drain the spaghetti into a colander. Rinse under cold water; set aside. Note: you'll use the pot in the next step.
2. In the same pot, heat the oil with the pancetta over medium heat; add the mushrooms, onion, garlic, and 1/8 teaspoon salt. Sauté until the mushrooms are lightly browned. If desired, drain off all except about 1 tablespoon of the fat. If using, add the peas; transfer the mixture to a bowl.
3. In the same pot, melt the butter over medium-low heat; stir in the flour, pepper, and nutmeg. Cook and stir until smooth and bubbly, about 1 minute (do not brown). Remove the pot from the stove; cool several minutes. Gradually whisk in the warm milk and sherry. Simmer, stirring, over medium-low heat, until flavorful and thickened, about 15 minutes. Season to taste with salt.
4. Add the cooked spaghetti, mushroom mixture, turkey, and half of the cheeses to the pot; mix well with a wooden spoon. Adjust the salt to taste. Spread the mixture into an 8x12-inch baking dish; top with the remaining cheeses. Bake until hot and golden on top, 20 to 30 minutes.