



Victory Garden Vegetable Au Gratin

Cream cheese and cashews give this modern version of vegetable au gratin a hearty, filling punch.

(Victory Gardens: A Salute to Self-sufficiency by Lisa Kirvirist)

Wartime recipes focused on the creative, tasty use of leftovers. This updated version of a classic vegetable gratin, a French-inspired casserole, uses whatever leftover cooked vegetables are on hand along with bread crumbs.

Ingredients

Casserole 3 cups chopped, steamed vegetables; ideally 1 cup each of three different vegetables, which may include broccoli, peas, peppers, carrots, green beans, corn or cauliflower 1 medium onion, diced 1 T. olive oil 1/2 tsp. thyme 1/2 tsp. marjoram 1/2 tsp. salt, or to taste 1/2 cup cashews, coarsely chopped

Breadcrumb Topping 3 slices slightly stale bread, cut into 1/2-inch cubes 2 T. butter or margarine 1/2 tsp. thyme 1/2 tsp. marjoram

White Sauce 2 T. flour 2 T. butter 1 cup milk 1 cube vegetable bouillon 4 ounces (1/2 package) cream cheese, softened and cut into cubes

Preparation

Sauté onions in olive oil until soft. In a large bowl, combine onions with cooked vegetables. Mix in thyme, marjoram and salt. Stir in cashews. For the breadcrumb topping, melt butter over medium heat in a saucepan. Toss the breadcrumbs in melted butter. Add herbs, and season with salt and pepper to taste.

For the white sauce, melt butter over medium heat in saucepan. Stir in flour. Continue to cook and stir until mixture just begins to bubble. Crumble the vegetable bouillon cube into the milk and slowly add to the butter/flour mixture. Cook and stir mixture until sauce thickens and is starting to bubble a little. Stir in cream cheese until well blended. Remove from heat.

Stir the sauce mixture into the bowl of cooked vegetables. Toss well to blend and coat all vegetables. Spoon the vegetable and sauce mixture into a greased 8- by 8-inch baking dish. Sprinkle the breadcrumb mixture evenly on top of the vegetables. By using a large baking dish, you'll allow more of the casserole to have the added crispness of the breadcrumbs. Bake for 20 minutes at 250 degrees F or until breadcrumbs appear toasted.