

Chicken & Pasta Bake with Cheesy Nacho Topping

Serves 4

Ingredients

250g Pasta shapes
200-250g Cooked chicken
1 tbs Vegetable oil
1 large Onion, peeled and roughly chopped
1 large Courgette, trimmed and cut into even bite-size pieces
1 large Pepper (ideally red, for colour)
570ml (1 pint) Milk
25g Plain flour
50g Butter or margarine
200g Cheese, grated
3 Good handfuls of tortilla chips
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Method

Cook the pasta according to the packet instructions, but still firm to the bite.

Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas mark 6.

Cut the cooked chicken into bite-size pieces.

Heat the vegetable oil in a large frying pan over a medium heat; add the onion and fry for 4 minutes. Then add the prepared courgette and pepper and continue to fry for another 6-7 minutes until the vegetables are lightly coloured and tender. Remove from the heat and set aside.

To make the all-in-one cheese sauce, pour the milk into a small saucepan and add the butter and flour. Bring everything gradually up to simmering point over a medium heat, whisking continuously with a balloon whisk, until the sauce has thickened and becomes smooth and glossy. Add 100g of the grated cheese stir well and season to taste.

Combine the cooked pasta, chicken, and vegetables with the sauce, stir and ensure everything is well coated. Check the seasoning, adding more if required. Transfer the mixture to a large oven-proof dish.

Use your hands to crumble the tortilla chips over the mixture, you want nice crunchy pieces, not too small. Sprinkle over the remaining 100g grated cheese, before popping in the oven and baking for 25-30 minutes, or until piping hot.

Serve immediately.

Notes and Tips

This all-in-one sauce is versatile. If the sauce is not going to be cooked again, as in this recipe, once it has thickened, reduce the heat to low and allow the sauce to cook for 5 minutes, stirring regularly. This cooks out the flour and takes out the raw taste of the flour. The cheese can be replaced by all sorts of ingredients for different recipes.

You can also adapt this recipe to use up left-over foods, liked turkey instead of chicken or Christmas veggies (ideally about 450g) such as carrots, peas, leaks, cauliflower, or broccoli instead of the courgette and peppers.

The company who makes Mexicana also make Applewood Smoked Cheddar, which they kindly provided, so you can try either cheese in this recipe.