

## **Eat Your Way to Health**

**Hands Together Ludlow in partnership with Discovery Centre,  
Craven Arms**

### **Pasta bake variations**

#### **Cheesy Leek and Bacon Pasta Bake (Serves 4)**

##### **Ingredients:**

- 150g bacon, with rind cut off, sliced into strips. Streaky bacon is fine, or use bacon bits if you can get them.
- 1 tablespoon sunflower or vegetable oil
- 2 medium leeks, cut into 2 cm chunks
- 200-300g pasta shapes (penne, twirls or similar)
- 25 g butter or margarine
- 25 g or 1 heaped tablespoon plain flour
- 300 ml of milk (semi-skimmed is fine)
- 100g hard cheese e.g., Cheddar, grated, plus more for topping (optional)
- ½ - 1 teaspoon mustard (made mustard or mustard powder) (optional)
- Salt and pepper to taste
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##### **Method**

1. Gently fry the bacon in a dry frying pan until the fat runs and fry until browned. Add the oil to the pan and add the leeks, cooking for 3-4 min, or until almost tender. Remove from the heat and leave to one side.
2. In a medium pan gently melt the butter or margarine over a very low heat, add the flour and mix to form a smooth paste. Cook gently for 1-2 minutes.
3. Gradually add the milk a little at a time, mixing thoroughly after each addition to keep the sauce smooth. Once all the milk is added, bring the sauce to the boil, stirring constantly. Cook the sauce for 3-4 minutes to thicken. Add the cheese and season with salt, pepper and mustard if using. Reduce the heat and stir occasionally until the cheese is melted. You shouldn't have any problems with this sauce but if it does go lumpy – DON'T PANIC! – get a whisk and just keep whisking! Don't use a metal whisk in an aluminium pan or the sauce will go grey.
4. Bring a large saucepan of salted water to the boil and cook the pasta until 'al dente' (slightly firm), following the instructions on the packet.
5. Drain the pasta & return to the saucepan
6. Add the cheese sauce and the bacon and leeks to the pasta and combine.
7. Eat straight away or for a crispy topped finish – pour into a baking dish, top with more grated cheese and heat in the oven at 180C for 20-30 minutes.

##### **Variations:**

**Tuna and different vegetables:** Ignore the bacon and use one or two tins of tuna, plus either leeks, as above, or mushrooms, peppers, broccoli, courgettes or whatever you like. For quantities, be guided by size and how much you would serve to the family; so perhaps three leeks, 150 gm mushrooms, one or two peppers, 300 gm

broccoli, three or four courgettes or frozen peas. For leeks, mushrooms, peppers, and courgettes, slice them and fry in 2 tbs oil until they start to soften, put aside and follow the recipe above from step 3. For broccoli or frozen peas, add these to the pasta towards the end of the cooking time, so that they all cook at the same time. (About 4 to 5 minutes for broccoli, 2 or 3 minutes for frozen peas). Mix the cooked pasta, the vegetables and the drained tuna with the cheese sauce and continue as in step 7.

**Chicken:** If you have left over chicken, perhaps from a roast, cut it into bite size pieces and use instead of the tuna. You could make the sauce using chicken stock instead of milk, either using a stock cube, or home-made stock made by boiling up the chicken carcass. Combine with whatever vegetables you like, as above.

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