



Arun's Christmas Béchamel Bake

Here's a great way to use up left-over meat and veggies after a hearty Christmas feast. A guaranteed comfort food dish that delivers on flavour and simplicity by the bucket load!

Serves 4

Ingredients:

75g butter
1 leek, washed and finely sliced
½ glass white wine
1 sachet *Green Saffron Turkey Delight spice mix*
25g flour
375ml full fat milk
75ml best chicken (or veg) stock
1 small sprig thyme, leave stripped
Dried cranberries, small handful
400g to 500g of cooked meat, shredded or vegetables, or a mix of both
3 or 4 handfuls of stale breadcrumbs
1 tsp rapeseed oil
25g freshly grated parmesan cheese
1 red Bird's Eye chilli, finely diced (*optional*)
Zest of ½ lemon
Small handful flat leaf parsley, finely chopped

Method:

1. Turn your oven to 190°C, Gas Mark 5
2. Take a large casserole or deep baking tray, no less than 20cm square, pop on to a medium heat, add 25g of the butter, allow to melt, then add the leek, allow to soften, stirring occasionally.
3. Then add the wine, bring to a bubble and continue to cook until the liquid has completely, yet only just evaporated. Take off the heat and set aside.
4. In a medium sized saucepan, add the remaining butter, place on a medium heat and, as soon as it melts and foams, add the spice mix, stir, then add the flour and stir briskly to form a smooth paste.
5. Now, turn up the heat, take a whisk, add the milk, a little at time to the saucepan, then the stock stirring all the time until you have a creamy textured sauce.
6. Turn down the heat and allow to bubble for 3 to 4 minutes stirring occasionally, sprinkle in the thyme, the cranberries, stir then take off the heat and set aside
7. Pop the meat (and veggies if you're using them) into the casserole, gently mix to combine with the softened leek, then roughly flatten out to form an even layer
8. Pour the spiced sauce over the meat and veggies, gently mix with a fork, then pop onto a middle shelf in the oven for 10 minutes
9. Meanwhile, in a small bowl mix the breadcrumb, oil, parmesan, chilli, zest and parsley to combine everything and coat the crumb as evenly as possible
10. Open the oven door, pull out the dish, sprinkle the crumb mix over the casserole, then pop back in your oven, bake for another 10 to 15 minutes or until the crumb turns golden brown and the sauce bubbles up through.
11. Take to table with a big spoon and a green salad. Tuck in immediately!

TIPS:

- i) Any bread you have leftover, going stale, pop into a freezer bag and freeze. You can then blitz and use these for your bakes
- ii) For extra indulgence, make double the amount of sauce, use half for this recipe and add 100g of a hard cheese to the other half. Serve the bake with your glorious cheese sauce!
- iii) This can be used as a vegetarian recipe. If you're doing so, grate 20g of fresh ginger into the leek pan for extra warmth and zingy flavour.