

## TURKEY TETRAZZINI

One of the best things about Thanksgiving is leftovers. My father always preferred Friday's open-faced turkey and stuffing sandwiches gravy to Thursday's feast. My mother's favorite was turkey sandwiches with cranberry relish. And I always wanted to make turkey chow mein. And of course, there was turkey broth, made with the bones and scraps that made the best turkey noodle soup.

One of the classic Thanksgiving leftover dishes is Turkey Tetrazzini, named for Luisa Tetrazzini, a famous opera star of the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Originally it was Chicken Tetrazzini, and was apparently created in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century at either the Knickerbocker Hotel in New York or the Palace Hotel in San Francisco. Just when someone decided that the recipe would be a great way to use up leftover turkey is unclear, but the recipe worked even better with turkey.

Basically, the recipe consists of some leftover cut-up turkey mixed with cooked mushrooms and noodles in a white sauce and put in a casserole, covered with breadcrumbs and cheese, and baked in the oven. But there are more variations than you can imagine. Here's how I make it, more or less.

In a large kettle of boiling salted water, cook about 8 ounces, or half a bag, of wide egg noodles until done and drain them and dump the noodles into a large mixing bowl. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, melt 4 tablespoons (half a stick) of unsalted butter over medium heat and add a shallot, peeled and finely chopped. Stir for a few minutes until the shallot turns translucent, and then add about half a pound of sliced mushrooms. One of those boxes of pre-sliced white mushrooms you can find in the supermarket's produce section works fine. Sauté the mushrooms until they have softened and most of the liquid they give off has evaporated—about 8-10 minutes.

Stir in 4 tablespoons of all-purpose flour and cook, stirring constantly, for about 3 minutes. Slowly add a can of chicken broth, followed by  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of white wine and  $1\frac{3}{4}$  cup of milk. I also like to add just a little grated nutmeg, but don't worry if you don't have any. Bring the mixture to the boil, stirring constantly, and simmer gently for about 5 minutes.

Turn off the heat and add the contents to the bowl with the noodles, along with 3 cups of roughly chopped leftover turkey,  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup of grated parmesan cheese, and 1 cup of frozen peas cooked briefly first in the microwave. (The peas may not be traditional but I like them.) Mix the contents well and season to taste with some salt and freshly ground pepper. I also add a few drops of liquid hot pepper seasoning—not enough to make the dish spicy, but to perk up the flavor a little bit.

Preheat your oven to 375 degrees, and transfer the contents of the mixing bowl into a buttered, shallow 3-quart casserole. In a little bowl, mix together another  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup of grated Parmesan cheese with  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup of fresh bread crumbs, along with a little salt and pepper, and sprinkle evenly over the top of the casserole. Dot the topping with a tablespoon of butter, cut in little bits. Bake in the 375 degree oven for 30 to 40 minutes, until bubbly and the top is golden brown.

There are many variations on this recipe. For instance, replace the white wine with 3 tablespoons of dry sherry. Or instead of using shallots, use some slivered leeks instead. Some recipes call for the use of spaghetti, broken in half, or even thin angel hair noodles instead of wide noodles. Some cooks add a teaspoon or so of fresh thyme, or a quarter teaspoon of dried thyme to their sauce.

This recipe is quite rich, so the only thing you'll need to serve with it is a green salad. I like to make a simple green salad of baby romaine or butter lettuce, dressed with a lemon-juice and olive oil dressing. To the salad I'll add some raw fresh white mushrooms, thinly sliced. I do this fresh for salad rather than using the package mushrooms, then I add some shavings of Parmesan cheese or other hard cheese just before serving.

This is Steve Muni for the Hometown Kitchen, wishing you and yours a wonderful and warm Thanksgiving.