

This is a weirdly named casserole of pasta, beef and cheese in a tomato sauce. The only accurate thing in the name is "American". Which is also redundant since the concept of "Chop Suey" is American in origin. Basically, a dish was developed in the US that seemed vaguely Chinese and was named "Chop Suey". In time Americans accepted it as an actual Chinese dish. Then a dish evolved with macaroni, beef and cheese in tomato sauce and was named "American Chop Suey" to differentiate from "Chinese Chop Suey" which was always American and never Chinese in the first place. To make matters worse - this dish is Italian-American in origin. Not to mention it appears to have been created in military mess halls. Or its relationship to goulash and beef-a-roni. Anyway, just think of it as a casserole of macaroni-sized pasta, hamburger and tomato sauce with mozzarella and parmesan cheese.



American Chop Suey (Macaroni, Beef, and Cheese Skillet Casserole) Recipe

Ingredients

- 1 pound elbow macaroni or other tubular pasta, such as cavatappi
- Kosher salt
- 2 (28-ounce) cans whole peeled tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 large onion, finely diced (about 1 1/2 cups)
- 1 large green pepper, finely diced (about 1 cup)
- 4 cloves garlic, minced (about 4 teaspoons)
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 1/4 cup finely minced fresh parsley
- 1 pound 80/20 ground beef
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce, plus more for serving
- 1 cup homemade or store-bought low-sodium chicken stock
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 pound low moisture whole milk mozzarella cheese, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 3 ounces roughly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

Directions

1. Place macaroni in a large bowl and cover with hot water. Season generously with salt. Let rest, stirring twice during the first 10 minutes, while you prepare the other ingredients.
2. Using a hand blender directly in the tomato jar or a regular countertop blender, process tomatoes until mostly smooth. Set aside.
3. Heat oil and butter in a 5-quart straight-sided sauté pan or Dutch oven over medium-high heat, swirling, until butter is mostly melted. Add onions and peppers, reduce heat to medium and cook, stirring frequently, until softened but not browned, about 7 minutes. Add garlic, oregano, red pepper flakes, and half of parsley, and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 1 minute.
4. Clear a space in the center of the pan and add meat. Increase heat to high. Cook, breaking it up first with a wooden spoon, then with a potato masher, until broken into small pieces. Continue cooking until no longer pink, about 4 minutes. Add puréed tomatoes and bring to a simmer.

5. Drain noodles in a large colander set in the sink. Add to pot with beef. Add Worcestershire sauce and chicken stock and stir, folding noodles through the sauce until noodles and sauce are well-integrated. Cover and cook at a hard simmer until noodles are mostly cooked, about half of cook-time indicated on box.
6. Remove lid and stir to combine. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Add half of cubed mozzarella and stir to incorporate rapidly (do not overstir or the mixture will stretch and stick to your spoon). Spread remaining mozzarella over surface of dish. Sprinkle half of Parmesan over dish. Cover and cook over the lowest possible heat for 3 minutes. Remove from heat and let rest with cover on for 5 minutes.
7. Uncover, sprinkle with remaining Parmesan and herbs and serve immediately, passing extra Worcestershire sauce at the table.

Special Equipment

4 1/2- to 5-quart straight-sided sauté pan with lid

Notes

The chop suey can also be completed in a casserole dish. Make the sauce as directed through step 4. Add Worcestershire sauce directly to sauce, but omit chicken broth. In a large pot, boil the macaroni until half-cooked. Drain and add to the sauce. Transfer mixture to a large casserole dish. Stir in half the mozzarella, top with the remaining mozzarella and half the Parmesan, and bake in a 375°F (190°C) oven until pasta is fully cooked, sauce is bubbling, and cheese is fully melted, about 30 minutes. Remove from oven, top with remaining Parmesan and herbs, let rest five minutes, and serve passing extra Worcestershire sauce on the side.

