

## Recipes from F901, Comfort Foods II, Winter 2013

### Included:

Tuscan Tomato Soup. Pomodoro  
Macaroni and Cheese  
Chicken Fricassee  
Ambrosia

(The recipe for Beef Stew by Ted Parker was emailed to class members, and the recipe for chocolate chip cookies is on the Toll House cookie package.)

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### Tuscan Tomato Soup, Pomodoro

Serves 6

1 large onion  
kosher salt  
pinch crushed pepper flakes  
3 garlic cloves, smashed and finely chopped  
1 cup white wine  
2 pounds fresh tomatoes, diced  
10 basil leaves, half whole and half cut in a chiffonade  
2 cups tomato juice  
2 cups day-old Italian bread, crusts removed and cubed  
½ cup parmesan cheese, grated

Coat a large wide pot with olive oil over medium heat and add onions. Season with salt and crushed red pepper to taste and cook until onions are soft and very aromatic, about 8 to 10 minutes. Toss in the garlic and cook for 2 to 3 more minutes. Add the wine and cook until it has reduced by half. Stir in the tomatoes, season with salt to taste and cook until the tomatoes are really soft and juicy, about 12 to 15 minutes. Toss in the whole basil leaves.

Working in batches, carefully puree the tomatoes in blender. Return the puree to the pot, add the tomato juice and the bread. Cook soup over medium heat until the bread has completely lost its shape and the soup is really thick, about 20 minutes. Taste soup and adjust seasonings. Ladle soup into bowls and serve garnished with grated cheese, basil chiffonade and drizzle over high quality olive oil.

Note: Before blending hot soup, allow to cool for a few minutes; otherwise, the hot liquid will explode through the tube and you will have a huge mess.

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## Ambrosia

This is simply whipped cream with varying embellishments. I used just short of a quart of heavy cream and whipped it, adding a teaspoon of sugar and a teaspoon of vanilla flavoring at the end. I then added a drained can of pineapple chunks, a drained can of mandarin oranges, a drained jar of maraschino cherries and the cherries were cut in half, a fistful of shredded coconut and a fistful of mini marshmallows. Also a small package of chopped walnuts. Mixed all together and ready to serve.

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## Macaroni and Cheese

I made my standard mac and cheese recipe although I am aware that others sometimes add egg yolks or different cheeses. The cheeses I used included a package of shredded cheddar and a bag of many cheese ends that have been in my fridge and that I shredded for this dish. They included fontina, cheddar, havarti, and maybe asiago.

Remember, this recipe served many so you have to scale down to making two cups of sauce, rather than three for a reasonable family size.

6 T. butter

6T flour

5 cups milk (I used 2%)

½ cup of cream (optional)

1 and ½ boxes of elbow noodles

one package of shredded cheddar and at least one, if not more, of asiago, fontina, havarti, or cheddar. Some folks use American,

Melt the butter in heavy skillet and when it has stopped foaming, add the flour and stir, incorporating the flour into the butter making a roux, or a paste. Keep stirring for about two minutes to force the flour to cook and then gradually add the milk in one cup increments until all is used. Stir continually for a period of maybe five minutes when the sauce begins to thicken and is smooth. If it starts to boil, that's as thick or thin as you will get it. Take it off the heat. If you want to enrich it, you can add some cream at this point or at any point before you put it into the oven.

Now add a little salt and pepper and all of the cheeses, stirring the cheese around until it is all melted. You can always add more cheese if you want it more cheesy.

Meanwhile, you have cooked the elbow macaroni or other short pasta as you choose in boiling water that's, very important, you have salted heavily. This is the only time that you can get salt into the pasta noodles and it will make a difference in the taste of the whole product. When the pasta is al dente, drain and pour into the cheese pot, stirring it around until all is coated with cheese sauce. I sometimes add a little dry mustard to it for a little bite or even coarse pepper flakes, just a few, for sharpness.

At this point, you want to decide if the dish is creamy enough. You can add more milk, or some of the pasta water. Bear in mind that al dente noodles will continue to cook and absorb some of the sauce. If the dish is not really sloppy, it is too dry.

Meanwhile, you will have made the topping. I used shredded white bread that was mixed with melted butter and then spread over the top of the casserole dish. You could also use Panko bread crumbs or crushed potato chips, or anything else that has a crunch. Possibly parmesan cheese mixed with Panko.

Place in a preheated 375 degree oven for about 35 minutes or until the top is golden brown. Remember, all parts of this dish are already cooked so you are just heating them together. Dish will be very hot but go ahead and serve.

Any leftover the next day will be better.

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#### Chicken Fricassee:

For our large group I used three large breasts that I cut into thirds, a package of five thighs, and about 12 drumsticks. At home, I washed them all and dried them.

We worked with the large electric skillet and the purple cookpot simultaneously. We put 80% canola oil and 20% butter into each vessel and then when the fat was clearly hot, browned the chicken pieces, turning when the underside of each piece was easy to release. Finished the browning and removing to a tray off heat.

Meanwhile, students had chopped in ¼ inch dice four carrots, four stalks of celery and two onions. These were divided in two and placed into the two cooking vessels and cooked, stirring to keep from burning and just to soften. Then we added 1/3 cup of white wine to each and let that cook for a minute or so, then added to each mushrooms that had been cleaned and quartered...one eight ounce package for each pot. Cooked for about five minutes. Then a whole carton of chicken stock to each and when it began to boil, added the chicken parts back into their pots. Also added a few sprigs of fresh thyme and some chopped parsley. Covered the pots, lowered the heat, and let cook for about 25 minutes until they were clearly done. Checked for seasonings at this point, adding salt and or pepper if called for.

We made a slurry of egg yolks and cream to thicken the sauce. To do that, you crack two eggs and separate out the yolks and beat with ¼ cup of cream, mixing well. Then you add to the slurry a tablespoon at a time some of the hot pot liquid and stir quickly to warm the eggs but not scramble them. When you've added about 5 tablespoons of hot liquid, you gradually add this back into the chicken dish stirring constantly until well incorporated and then before too long the mixture should thicken somewhat. Cook this down until the liquid makes a nice gravy. (time limits cut that short for us so the liquid was not thick enough to suit me but we had to eat). Add some chopped tarragon and a glob of butter. Ready to serve. Suggest hot noodles as a bed for the sauce and chicken.