**January- Casseroles and Comfort Food**

**Loaded Baked Potato Casserole**

Ingredients:

Non-stick cooking spray

2 (12 oz.) cans Evaporated Milk

2 cups water

6 Tablespoons Butter or margarine

3 boxes (4.9 oz.) Cheddar & Bacon Potatoes

2 cups sour cream

½ cup chopped chives or green onions

1 cup (4 oz.) shredded sharp Cheddar cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray 13”x9” baking pan with cooking spray.

Combine evaporated milk, water, butter, potato slices, and sauce mix in a 5 quart pot.

Cook over medium heat, just until mixture comes to a boil. Remove from heat.

Stir in sour cream and chives (or green onions).

Pour into prepared pan. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake 40 minutes or until bubbly and golden brown.

**Shrimp, Lemon, and Tarragon Risotto**

Serves 6

Ingredients:

2 quarts store-bought, reduced sodium vegetable or chicken brown, or homemade vegetable or chicken stock

18 large shrimp, peeled, deveined, and butterflied

2 Tablespoons olive oil

4 Tablespoons unsalted butter

1 large Spanish onion, peeled and cut into small dice

1 pound arborio rice (2 cups)

1 cup dry white whine

About 2 Tablespoons grated lemon zest

About 2 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice

2 Tablespoons chopped fresh tarragon leaves

Coarse salt

Freshly ground black pepper

Pour the broth into a pot large enough to hold the shrimp, and bring to a boil over high heat. Add the shrimp and poach at a simmer, lowering the heat if needed, until firm and pink, about 5 minutes. Remove the shrimp with a slotted spoon, and set them aside on a plate. Keep the broth simmering over how heat.

Heat the olive oil and melt 2 Tablespoons of the butter in a large, heavy-bottomed pot over medium-high heat until hot, but not smoking. Add the onion and cook until softened but not browned, about 4 minutes. Add the rice, stir to coat well, and cook for about 4 minutes. Add the wine; bring to a boil, and cook, stirring, until nearly all of the wine has evaporated.

Ladle 1 cup of simmering broth into the rice and cook, stirring, until it is nearly absorbed. Continue to add broth in ½-cup increments, stirring the rice constantly. When down to the last 2 cups or so, add the broth in smaller increments until the rice is softened but still a bit al dente. (You may not need all of the broth, or you may need to supplement with more broth or water.) This step should take about 18 minutes altogether.

Stir in 1 Tablespoon lemon zest and 1 Tablespoon lemon juice. Taste and adjust with additional zest or juice as needed until the risotto attains a nice, bright flavor. Stir in the reserved shrimp, the tarragon, and the remaining 2 Tablespoons butter. Season with salt and pepper.

To serve, divide the risotto among 6 warm dinner plates or shallow bowls.

**Tomato Bisque**

Ingredients:

2 Tablespoons unsalted butter

2 medium onions, diced

4 cloves of minced garlic (or to taste)

2 (16 oz.) cans Hunts Petite Diced Tomatoes

1 cup heavy cream

1 cup water

1 bay leaf

½ cup brown sugar

½ cup grated Parmesan cheese

Salt, pepper, dash of Tabasco sauce

In a 6 quart stock pot, sauté onions in butter; add garlic.

Pulse tomatoes in food processor 4 or 5 times, to break down. Add tomatoes, water, cream, and bay leaf to onions. Simmer.

Cook 1 hour. Remove bay leaf. Puree soup in batches.

Add cheese, brown sugar, Tabasco Sauce, salt, and pepper.

**Spinach-Artichoke Casserole**

Yield: 8-10 servings

Ingredients:

2 (10 oz.) packages frozen chopped spinach, thawed

1 (14 oz.) can artichoke hearts, drained and chopped. (I used 1 ½ cups firmly packed before chopping.)

1 (10¾ oz.) can cream of mushroom soup, undiluted

1 (8 oz.) container sour cream

3 green onions, chopped

2 Tablespoons flour

1 Tablespoon minced fresh parsley

¼ teaspoon Worcestershire Sauce

1 Tablespoon butter

1 cup sliced mushrooms (I used 1 ½ cups.)

2 garlic cloves, pressed

1 Tablespoon lemon juice

½ teaspoon black pepper

2 cups (8 oz.) shredded Monterey Jack cheese with peppers

Drain spinach well. Stir together spinach and next 7 ingredients.

Melt butter in skillet over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms and next 3 ingredients and sauté 5 minutes, or until mushrooms are tender.

Stir mushroom mixture and 1 cup cheese into spinach mixture; spoon into greased

9” square baking dish. Sprinkle with remaining cheese.

Bake at 400 degrees for 30 minutes.

**Cheesy Mexican Chicken**

Ingredients:

6 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (about 2 pounds), pounded to ¼” thickness.

1 can (10¾ oz.) condensed cream of chicken soup

1 package (8 oz.) shredded mild Cheddar cheese, divided

½ cup milk

1 package (1 ¼ oz.) taco seasoning mix

3 cups corn or tortilla chips

Place **chicken** in 9”x13” baking dish. Mix soup, 1 ½ cups cheese, milk and taco seasoning. Spoon over chicken. Top with broken chips.

Cover and bake at 375 degrees for 30 minutes.

Remove cover; top with reserved ½ cup of cheese

Bake uncovered for 10 minutes, or until cheese is melted.