

Noodle Kugel, the Way Jake Likes It

This recipe was originally my mother's. She made many different versions of this. I believe the apples on top originally came from her friend, Wilma Weiner. My mother sliced apples and placed them on the top of the kugel, uncooked. At some point, I began caramelizing the apples and placing them on top of the kugel, then baking.

Jake and Hope love this. I once made this for Hope's family when we first moved into our apartment on 186th Street. They were, as usual, blown away by it. LOL.

I make this only once or twice a year, once always for the break-fast for Yom Kippur, and then again on Shavuot. It's not something one makes for two or three people. It grows as you make it. You need a large crowd.

A word about kugels. Kugels are a staple of Ashkenazi Jewish cooking. They come in all forms, sweet and savory, and generally use noodles. They can be made with potatoes and some vegetables as well. They were traditionally made for shabbat and holidays as they could be made ahead and kept warm. They are about the most 'Jewish' dish one can make.

My grandmother Sari (Charlotte) made a version of this with lekvar (Hungarian plum jam) in dollops both inside the kugel and on top. This was my grandfather Jack's favorite. Apparently his mother made a similar version. Her version can also be made with apricot jam (also very Hungarian). Many versions include cinnamon with raisins, but no topping or jam. That is a more German/Polish approach.

There's also the issue of kashrut and mixing milk and meat dishes. I will include a dairy free version of raisin kugel elsewhere in this 'cookbook.'

INGREDIENTS

1 lb. broad egg noodles

(note that today most brands of egg noodles sell 12 oz. bags instead of 1 lb bags. For six or less people you can make this recipe with a 12 oz bag without changing the proportions on the custard filling. For larger groups use 1 lb. of noodles.)

Custard

6 eggs

2 heaping TBSPs sour cream (use silverware not a measuring spoon)

1 cup cottage cheese (large curd)

1 1/2 cup milk

1/2 cup sugar

1 cup raisins (more if you really like a lot of raisins)

1 TSP vanilla

1 small can of crushed pineapple - optional

Caramelized apples (6) - see attached recipe

Optional - Corn flake crust

RECIPE:

Boil salted water for noodles. Add noodles, boil to al dente and drain. Rinse noodles.

Prepare apples.

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees.

Combine all custard ingredients except raisins in bowl and mix by hand with a good wire whisk, the kind you would use for a salad dressing. After well mixed, add raisins and mix with wooden spoon.

Butter a large pyrex baking dish

If using the corn flake crust, melt stick butter in saute pan add corn flake crumbs when butter is bubbling. Combine and hold.

Place noodles in large bowl. Add custard and mix. Let sit for a few minutes.

Spread corn flake mixture on bottom of baking dish evenly if using. Spoon noodle and custard mixture into baking dish. Try not to disturb the corn flake crust while doing this.

Using a large spoon spread caramelized apples on top of noodle mixture. There will be caramel left in the pan. Spoon that over the apple mixture.

Bake at 350 degrees till done, about 90 minutes, but begin checking at 60 minutes till center of kugel is set.

Note - In cooking school I was taught to always to bake custards in a water bath (Bain Marie). I have never used one in this recipe and the custard has always come out perfect.