

ALI'S KITCHEN

Ode to the Tater Tot Meatloaf Casserole

Casseroles bring to mind childhood summers, picnics, parties and family reunions

Column and photos by Ali Carter, Wisconsin Potato Growers Auxiliary

My husband and I had a friendly debate after I announced my plan to include a tater tot casserole recipe in this month's *Badger Common'Tater*.

Mike feels strongly that casseroles are a winter food, and while I agree that there is value and importance in eating seasonally, I also feel that casseroles are a dish not bound by a particular season. They can, and should, be eaten all year long.

Casseroles bring to my mind long childhood summers filled with church picnics, weekends with my grandparents at their cottage on the lake, graduation parties and family reunions.

As an adult, I look to casseroles as wonderful make-ahead meals that can be crafted from yesterday's leftovers or from the fresh bounty picked in our home garden.

I love a good casserole. And I am positive that I am not the only one.

As I scrolled through Google, attempting to show Mike that my "casseroles are not a food defined

by a season" theory was not as crazy as he believed it to be, I stumbled upon a poem titled "Ode to Tater Tot Casserole."

The writer highlights the joy that tater tot casserole can bring in this short poem. I am sharing it in the hope that it elicits a chuckle or two and convinces you not to wait for cooler weather before whipping up this Tater Tot Meatloaf Casserole for yourself!

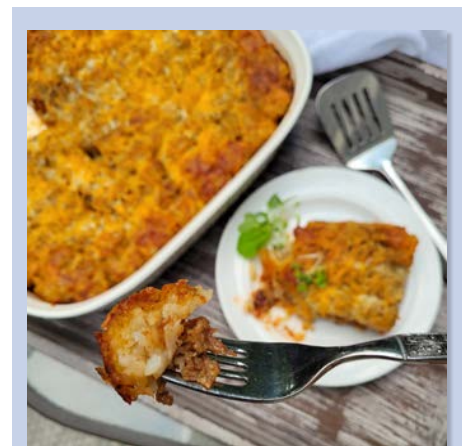
Ode to Tater Tot Casserole

by Marilyn Zelke-Windau

Dare I say
To all that may
Have had the opportunity
To pay
Heed to its taste:
I like tater tot
A LOT.

Dreaming of it from a cot
Staring at it in a pot
Or on a lunch tray steaming hot
Ooey, gooey
Creamy, chewy,

continued on pg. 62



INGREDIENTS:

Tater Tot Meatloaf Casserole

A well-seasoned meatloaf followed by a layer of tater tots and topped with cheese

- 2 lbs. ground beef
- 2 cups plain breadcrumbs (or finely crushed Ritz crackers)
- 1 packet (2 oz.) dry Lipton onion soup mix
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup ketchup
- 1 cup barbecue sauce
- 24 oz. frozen tater tots
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese



Crispy pillows,
 Hamburger stewy
 I like tater tot
 A LOT.

If convicted of a plot
 And condemned to soon be shot,
 I would call out in appeal:
 "Give me please just one last meal.
 If one meal is all I've got?
 I like tater tot
 A LOT!"

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

In a large mixing bowl, combine the ground beef, breadcrumbs, onion soup mix, eggs, 1/2 cup of the ketchup and 1/2 cup of the barbecue sauce. Mix well (hands are the absolute best tool here!).

Press the meat mixture into a 9x13-inch baking dish. Spread the top of the meat with the remaining 1/2 cup of ketchup and 1/2 cup of barbecue sauce.

Line the tater tots in a single layer on top of the sauce and then sprinkle the top of casserole with the shredded cheeses.

Cover the dish with aluminum foil and bake for 40 minutes. Carefully remove the foil from the dish and cook for an additional 30-40 minutes or until the meatloaf is cooked through and the top of the casserole has begun to brown. **BCT**

Enjoy!

Find more recipes at www.LifeOnGraniteRidge.com.

ADVERTISERS INDEX

ADAMA US.....47
 AgCountry Farm Credit Services...51
 Antigo Tater Trot.....5
 Big Iron Equipment.....19
 Bushmans' Inc.3
 Compeer Financial.....18
 Contree Sprayer & Equipment Company LLC12
 Corteva AgriScience.....28
 Fencil Urethane Systems14
 Heartland AG Systems.....17, 44
 Jay-Mar, Inc.....41
 John Miller Farms11
 J.W. Mattek & Sons, Inc.13
 Nelson's Vegetable Storage Systems Inc.31
 Noffsinger Mfg.....20
 North Central Irrigation37
 Northwestern Mutual Life, Antigo26
 Nutrien Ag Solutions21
 Oasis Irrigation64
 Omex USA.....48
 Oro Agri15
 Riesterer & Schnell9
 Roberts Irrigation25
 Ron's Refrigeration36
 Rural Mutual Insurance29
 Sand County Equipment.....2
 Schroeder Brothers Farms.....7
 Binfront Barriers43
 Swiderski Equipment.....27
 T.I.P.56
 Teleos Ag Solutions.....63
 TriCal Group.....33
 Vantage North Central.....40
 Volm Companies.....23
 WPVGA Subscribers.....49
 WPVGA Support Our Members....46
 WSPIA42