



# Festive Noodle Casserole

## My Cozy Kitchen Memory

This recipe is my kitchen hug. It is called American Chop Suey. My grandkids call it “Festive Noodle Casserole.” I still laugh at that. It is perfect for a busy weeknight. It fills the whole house with a warm, tomato smell.

I learned it from my neighbor, Mrs. Riley. She brought it over one snowy December. We ate it by the fire. It felt like a party in a bowl. Now, I make it when I miss old friends. Food can hold so many memories, you see.

## Why This Supper Matters

This dish matters because it brings everyone to the table. It is simple

and honest. You cook everything in one pot. That means less washing up! I love that. It lets you spend more time with your family.

It also teaches a good lesson. The best meals do not need fancy things. They just need good, basic ingredients. You probably have most of them already. Cooking like this builds confidence. It shows you can make something wonderful from simple starts.

## Let's Talk Flavor Friends

First, we brown the beef. Doesn't that smell amazing? Then come the onion and green pepper. They get soft and sweet. The garlic and tomato paste are the secret. They make the sauce taste deep and rich.

Here is a fun fact for you: *The Worcestershire sauce is a flavor wizard.* It adds a little tangy, savory magic. You might not see it, but you will taste it. The beef consommé makes the broth extra tasty. Then the macaroni cooks right in that yummy sauce. It soaks up all the good flavor.

## A Little Story From My Pot

I once forgot to buy the tomato sauce. Oh, I was in a tizzy! So I used a jar of plain spaghetti sauce instead. It worked just fine. My grandson said it was the best batch ever. That is my mini-anecdote for you.

It taught me not to worry so much. Cooking is friendly. It forgives little mistakes. Have you ever had to swap an ingredient in a panic? What did you use? I would love to hear your story.

See also [Melting Moments Holiday Cookies](#)

## Making It Just For You

This recipe is very friendly to change. Do you want to use ground turkey? Go ahead. Want more peppers? Toss them in. You are the boss of your own pot. That is the joy of cooking.

If someone at your table cannot eat gluten, you can still make this. Use gluten-free pasta. Just check the labels on the consommé and Worcestershire sauce. Does your family have a favorite pasta shape for casseroles? Mine always picks the elbows.

## Your Turn in the Kitchen

Now, it is your turn. Gather your ingredients. Put on some music. Enjoy the simple act of stirring and smelling. This dish is waiting to become your new memory.

When you make it, tell me this. What name would your family give this casserole? Would they call it something funny? Share your name idea with me. I am collecting them all in my heart.

## Ingredients:

Ingredient	Amount	Notes
Olive oil	2 tablespoons	
85% lean ground beef	1 pound	
Yellow onion, chopped	1 medium	
Green bell pepper, chopped	1 medium	
Garlic cloves, minced	3 cloves	
Tomato paste	3 tablespoons	
Italian seasoning	1 teaspoon	

Ingredient	Amount	Notes
Kosher salt	1 teaspoon	
Garlic powder	3/4 teaspoon	
Diced tomatoes, undrained	1 (15-ounce) can	
Tomato sauce	1 (15-ounce) can	
Condensed beef consommé (e.g., Campbell's)	1 (10.5-ounce) can	
Water	1 cup	
Worcestershire sauce	1 tablespoon	Check label for gluten-free if needed
Large elbow macaroni	2 1/2 cups (approx. 8 1/2 oz)	Use certified gluten-free pasta if needed



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This dish is pure comfort. My family calls it American Chop Suey. It always made our table feel like a party. The smell fills your whole house with warmth. Doesn't that smell amazing? It's simple, hearty, and feeds a crowd. I think of my grandkids laughing around the table. This recipe is my favorite way to make it.

## Instructions

**Step 1:** Grab your big, heavy pot. Pour in the olive oil and let it get warm. Add your ground beef. Use your spoon to break it into little pieces. Cook until it's all brown, no pink left. (A hot pot makes the beef brown nicely, not steam.) This takes about five minutes. What's your favorite part of a cozy dinner? Share below!

See also Peanut Butter Snowdrift Sandwich Cookies

**Step 2:** Now, add the onion and green pepper. Stir in the garlic, tomato paste, and all those good spices. I still laugh at how my brother hated peppers. Cook it for five minutes. The veggies will get soft. The tomato paste will get darker and smell wonderful. This step builds all the flavor.

**Step 3:** Time for the sauce! Pour in the diced tomatoes and tomato sauce. Add the can of beef consommé and the water. Don't forget the Worcestershire sauce. Give it a good stir. Put the lid on your pot. Turn the heat up high until it boils. This just takes a few minutes.

**Step 4:** Take the lid off. Turn the heat down to a happy little simmer. Stir in your elbow macaroni. Make sure the noodles are covered by the sauce. Put the lid back on. Let it cook for 8 to 10 minutes. The pasta will

become tender and soak up the flavor. Then it's ready to serve!

## Creative Twists

**Try a “Hidden Veggie” version.** Grate a zucchini or carrot into the sauce with the tomatoes. The kids will never know!

**Make it a “Kitchen Sink” bake.** Pour the finished dish into a pan. Top with shredded cheese and breadcrumbs. Bake until golden and bubbly.

**Give it a “Kick of Heat.”** Add a pinch of red pepper flakes with the spices. It gives the sauce a little warm surprise. Which one would you try first? Comment below!

## Serving & Pairing Ideas

This casserole is a full meal by itself. But I love a simple side. A crisp green salad with a tangy dressing is perfect. Some warm, buttery garlic bread is always a hit too. For a drink, a cold glass of milk is classic. Grown-ups might enjoy a smooth glass of red wine, like a Merlot. It sips nicely with the rich tomato sauce. Which would you choose tonight?

See also Roasted Tomato Holiday Soup



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## Keeping Your Chop Suey Cozy

This casserole stores beautifully. Let it cool completely first. Then pop it in the fridge for up to four days. You can also freeze it for three months. Use a freezer-safe container.

I love making a double batch. It saves a future busy night. I remember my first time freezing it. I was so proud of my future self! Batch cooking matters. It gives you a gift on a tired day.

Reheating is simple. Add a splash of water to a portion. Warm it on the stove or in the microwave. This keeps it from drying out. **Have you ever tried storing it this way? Share below!**

## Simple Fixes for Common Hiccups

Is your sauce too thin? Just let it simmer a bit longer. Uncover the pot. The extra liquid will cook off. I once added too much water. A little patience fixed it perfectly.

Worried about bland flavor? Taste it before adding the pasta. You can add a pinch more salt. This matters because seasoning builds layers of taste. Your confidence grows with each tweak.

Is the pasta getting mushy? Make sure your simmer is gentle, not a rolling boil. \*Fun fact: a hard boil can make pasta gluey.\* Check it at eight minutes. **Which of these problems have you run into before?**

## Your Quick Questions, Answered

**Q: Can I make this gluten-free?** A: Yes! Use gluten-free pasta. Check your Worcestershire and consommé labels too.

**Q: Can I make it ahead?** A: Absolutely. Follow the storage tips above. It reheats like a dream.

**Q: What if I don't have consommé?** A: Use beef broth. The flavor will still be wonderful.

**Q: Can I double the recipe?** A: You can. Use your biggest pot. Everything else stays the same.

**Q: Any optional add-ins?** A: A handful of mushrooms with the onions is lovely. **Which tip will you try first?**

## From My Kitchen to Yours

I hope this recipe finds its way to your table. It is simple, hearty, and full of love. These are the meals that build family memories. I would love to hear about your cooking adventure.

Tell me all about it in the comments below. **Have you tried this recipe?** Did your family enjoy it? Your stories are my favorite thing to read. Happy cooking!

—Elowen Thorn.



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