

sunflower oil for frying

NOODLE KUGEL WITH ONIONS AND MUSHROOMS

Our family has always loved noodle kugels with mushrooms, and so my mother prepares them in several versions. This rich kugel, which is flavored with cottage cheese and sour cream, is best as a main course for a vegetarian or dairy supper; a supper menu we like combines this kugel with side dishes of steamed asparagus and Israeli diced vegetable salad. For serving with poultry or meat, simply omit the dairy products and use oil or margarine for sautéing the onions and mushrooms. Actually, for meat meals, chicken fat would have been the traditional choice for sautéing among Ashkenazic Jews, but today in Israel many time-honored dishes like this one are made in lighter versions.

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| 7 or 8 ounces medium egg noodles | 1½ teaspoons paprika |
| 5 tablespoons butter, margarine, or vegetable oil | 2 large eggs, beaten |
| 1 large onion, chopped | 1 cup cream-style cottage cheese |
| 1 pound small button mushrooms, quartered | ½ cup sour cream |
| salt and freshly ground pepper to taste | ¼ cup snipped fresh dill, or 1 tablespoon dried |
| 2 medium garlic cloves, minced | ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper, or to taste |

Preheat oven to 350°F. Cook noodles, uncovered, in a large pot of boiling salted water over high heat for about 4 minutes or until nearly tender but firmer than usual. Drain, rinse with cold water, and drain again. Transfer to a large bowl.

Heat 4 tablespoons butter or oil in a large skillet over medium-low heat. Add onion and sauté about 12 minutes or until very tender. Add mushrooms, salt, pepper, garlic, and 1 teaspoon paprika and sauté about 12 minutes or until mushrooms are tender and onion is browned. If liquid remains in pan, cook over high heat, stirring, a few minutes until it evaporates. Cool slightly.

Add eggs, cottage cheese, sour cream, dill, and cayenne to noodles and mix well. Stir in mushroom mixture. Taste and adjust seasoning; mixture should be seasoned generously. Butter or oil a 2-quart baking dish and add noodle mixture. Sprinkle with remaining tablespoon oil or dot with butter, then dust with remaining paprika. Bake, uncovered, for 1 hour or until set. Serve from baking dish.

Makes 4 or 5 main-course or 6 to 8 side-dish servings