Lemon Tuna and Chickpea Pasta Bake

One 9 × 13-inch/23 × 33 cm bake; 6 portions | Active 30 min | Cook 45 min | Total 70 min

Ingredients

- 10 1/2 oz dry penne (300 g)
- 3 tablespoons olive oil (45 ml/42 g), divided
- 1 medium onion (150 g), finely diced
- 2 garlic cloves (6 g), minced
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour (40 g)
- 2 1/2 cups 2% milk (600 ml/610 g)
- 3/4 teaspoon fine salt (4.5 g)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper (1 g)
- 4 cans tuna in water (5 oz/142 g each), drained (450 g total drained fish)
- 2 cans chickpeas (15 oz/425 g each), drained and rinsed (510 g total drained)
- 2 cups frozen green peas (280 g)
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice (30 ml/30 g)
- 2 teaspoons finely grated lemon zest (4 g)
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan (45 g), divided
- 3/4 cup plain dry breadcrumbs (60 g)

Set out

9 × 13-inch/23 × 33 cm baking dish, Large pasta pot, Medium saucepan, Whisk, Instant-read thermometer, Fine sieve or slotted spoon for lifting cooked peas

Allergens

Fish, Wheat, Milk. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Heat oven to 400°F/200°C. In the pasta pot, boil the measured frozen peas according to their full packet instructions, then lift them out with a sieve or slotted spoon and drain. In the same water, boil penne for 2 minutes less than its package al dente time; drain. Prepare the sauce alongside.

2. Meanwhile, heat 2 tablespoons oil in the saucepan over medium heat. Cook onion for 5 minutes and garlic for 30 seconds. Stir in flour and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Gradually whisk in milk. Add salt and pepper; simmer gently for 4–5 minutes, whisking, until the sauce coats a spoon. Remove from heat.

3. Stir lemon juice, zest and 30 g of the Parmesan into the sauce. Fold in pasta, tuna, chickpeas and fully cooked drained peas, keeping tuna flakes intact. Spread in the baking dish.

4. Mix breadcrumbs with remaining tablespoon oil and remaining 15 g Parmesan. Scatter evenly over the filling. Bake 25–30 minutes, until the top is golden, the edges bubble and the center reaches 165°F/74°C. Rest 5 minutes and divide into six portions.

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Estimated nutrition per serving

Calories: 625 kcal | Protein: 37.4 g | Carbohydrate: 84.3 g | Fat: 15.8 g | Fiber: 10.3 g. One of 6 servings. Batch yield: One 9 × 13-inch/23 × 33 cm bake; 6 portions. Base ingredients and full measured oil included; optional variations excluded. Estimates vary with brands, cooking and actual portions.

Take the whole portion

Scoop each serving from the bottom of the dish so the sauce and chickpeas travel with the pasta. A container filled only from the dry upper layer will not represent the recipe's intended balance. Six equal portions are easier to distribute before the bake is placed in the refrigerator.

A useful detail

Use plain breadcrumbs, not a pre-seasoned mixture that adds an unpredictable amount of salt. Canned tuna is already cooked; the final temperature check is for the complete casserole.

Another way

Replace peas with 280 g frozen chopped green beans, weighed frozen, fully cooked according to their packet and drained before folding into the bake. This is not a short-cooking fresh-bean substitution; a longer packet preparation extends time.

Use 450 g cooked salmon in place of tuna, removing all skin and bones; the nutrition estimate will change. Use salmon cooked today or yesterday and safely chilled, and keep the final bake within 3 days of that original fish cooking date.

Keep it well

Cool in shallow containers and refrigerate at 40°F/4°C or below within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C. Keep up to 3 days or freeze portions up to 2 months. Reheat covered with 1 tablespoon/15 ml water per portion until the center reaches 165°F/74°C. Pack cold with two cold sources in an insulated lunch bag.