



Cooking From Scratch... 'I Can't Believe It's Tuna!'

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Many folks have written to me recently asking what to do with the cases of tuna they have stored for emergencies. The interesting thing about this, is several of them have begun their messages with the statement 'my family doesn't like tuna' and then gone on to ask for recipes which will mask the taste of the tuna, so they can utilize it and not be wasteful. My first suggestion to these folks, is please, continue to store a bit of food and other supplies ahead, so you are prepared in the event of illness, job loss, or natural disaster. My second suggestion is please store food which your family will use, and rotate the food by using it and replacing it as it is used. It is a good thing to be prepared, but having supplies on hand that your family will not use, or does not like, will not make things very pleasant if you are placed in a situation where you need to use the supplies. Tuna is a great storage item, as it is fairly inexpensive, small and nutritious. If your family likes tuna, it would be a good idea to look over your collection of recipes, and determine whether you have the other ingredients for tuna recipes, included in your pantry stores.

If your family does not enjoy eating tuna, an alternative would be to store canned chicken or turkey. These canned meats can be used in most any recipe calling for tuna, and can also help your family to stretch their food dollars. At times, you can find canned chicken or turkey on sale, but an alternative would be to prepare and freeze shredded chicken or turkey, to be used in this sort of recipe. The first thing to do, is to watch for sales in your local markets. At least once each month, chicken or turkey will come on sale, and you can purchase them whole, or in pieces, at prices to fit your budget. Using your stock pot place the washed poultry into the pot and cover with cool water. Season to your tastes, and cook on low heat for up to 2 or 3 hours. Next, you will need to cool the liquid and meat, and then place them in your refrigerator over night, or for several hours.

After removing the pot from your refrigerator, you will see that there is a skim of fat on the top of the liquid in your pot. You will need to remove this skim, and throw it away. Now, you can drain the broth from the cooked poultry, and place it into freezer containers or jars, and label them before placing them in the freezer. This broth can be used in many recipes, and will save you time and money later when it is needed. Next, remove skin and bones from the poultry, and discard them. Shred the remaining meat, and place it into zip baggies or freezer containers, label, and freeze for up to 6 months.

Now, for those of you who have families who do not enjoy eating tuna, as well as for those of you who are looking for another way to feed your family tuna, this recipe is a winner on both counts. It is very difficult to taste the tuna in this recipe, and it is a nice change from traditional tuna recipes.

'I Can't Believe It's Tuna' Casserole

1 can Cream of Mushroom Soup
1/4 cup Water
2 cups Chow Mien Noodles -- divided
1 can Tuna in Water -- drained
1 cup Celery -- sliced thin
1/4 cup Onion -- chopped
1/8 teaspoon Black Pepper

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Spray a 1 quart casserole with non-stick cooking spray and set aside. In a large bowl, combine mushroom soup, water, tuna, black pepper, onion, celery and 1 cup of chow mien noodles, and stir until well mixed. Pour mixture into prepared casserole, and spread remaining chow mien noodles over top of mixture. Bake, uncovered, for 30 minutes.

Yield: 4 servings

206.5 Calories, 9.6 Fat, 13.2 Protein, 17.1 Carb., 13 Chol., 519 Sodium