

Tuna Scalloped Potatoes

I went to an Easter dinner and one of the side dishes was scalloped potatoes. This is one of those dishes that when done right, can be divine. Tender potatoes, layered with cream and sometimes cheese (for me, it's always cheese, and it has to be browned) is the ultimate comfort food. It's perfect on the side for Easter, as it compliments the meal nicely without taking center stage.

A couple weeks or so later, I was trying to decide what to make for dinner, and remembered those potatoes — and I happened to have all of the ingredients handy to make some, but wanted it to be a full dinner. Enter Barnacle Bill's Oregon Hook and Line Caught Albacore Tuna. It's the perfect protein to add to scalloped potatoes to make it a filling casserole instead of side dish.

While this is not normally the time of year you would make such a dish, we've had some pretty cold, windy nights here lately, so this seemed perfect.

Now, scalloped potatoes are typically delicious, but there are a few ways you can go wrong. First, use Russet potatoes. They're starchy, which helps to thicken up the dish. Next, make sure to slice the potatoes evenly. Use a mandolin slicer if you have one for best results. This ensures the potatoes are all cooked evenly — you won't have a mushy bite followed by a mouth full of uncooked potato. Finally, use whole milk or half and half. I've tried versions of this in the past with lower fat milk, and it's just not the same.

The addition of tuna here really made the dish stand out. In addition to bulking it up for a full meal, the clean flavor of the high quality tuna really complimented the cheese nicely. I served this with a small salad and it made a simple, delicious meal.

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons butter, melted
2 1/2 pounds Russet potatoes, sliced about 1/4" thick
2 cups whole milk or half and half
Pinch nutmeg
1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves
2 cloves garlic, smashed
2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
1 package Barnacle Bill's Oregon Hook and Line Caught Albacore Tuna
Sea salt and fresh ground pepper, to taste

Directions:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Brush the butter in the bottom of a square baking dish.

Put the potatoes in a medium saucepan pour the milk over top. It's okay if milk does not cover the potatoes. Add the nutmeg, thyme, garlic, and a pinch of salt to the pan. Bring

to a simmer over medium heat, watching the entire time to make sure the milk doesn't boil over. When the milk starts bubbling, turn the heat down to medium low, and stir the potatoes gently to make sure they all get coated. Simmer for about 10 minutes, gently stirring every few minutes, and turn off heat.

Using a slotted spoon, transfer the potatoes to another bowl. Layer the potatoes, 1 1/2 cups of the cheese, and tuna in the prepared baking dish, seasoning with salt and pepper between layers. Pour the milk from the saucepan over the top of the casserole and cover with reserved cheese.

Cover the dish with foil, and bake for 45 minutes. Remove the foil and continue baking for 10-15 minutes more until top is browned. Let cool for 10-15 minutes before serving.